

21 1913

SEPTEMBER 1913

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

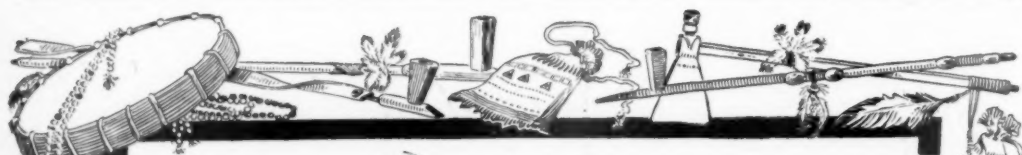


ALL
STAR
WRITERS
this

Rupert Hugh
Irvin S. Cobb
H.G. Wells
Peter B. Kyne
L.J. Beeston
Carolyn Shipman

Clifford S. Raynor
Frederick R. Bechdel
Alma Martin Estabrook

James Oliver, Guy Wood, Ida M. Evans,
Walter John, Owen Oliver and others



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Chief,
"Fights
the
Enemy"

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Prince Albert has soothed all kinds of pipe grouches for all kinds of men. One of the most interesting cases is that of the American Indians on the reservations. These direct descendants of the original jimmy pipers have taken to

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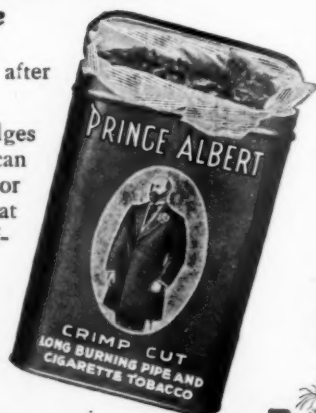
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The Red Book Magazine

*will have the
pleasurable distinction,
in its October number,
of being
the first publication
to present.*

George Randolph Chester

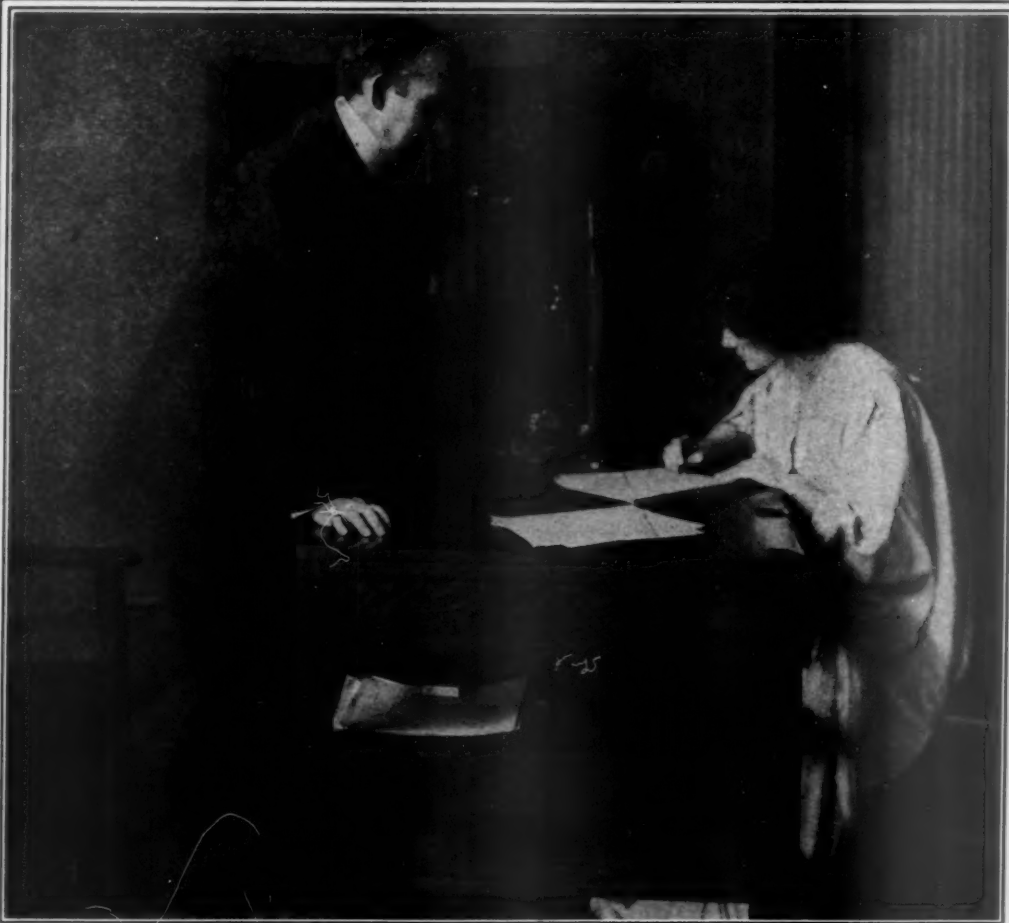
in collaboration with his wife,

Lillian Chester,

*in his latest and greatest
American novel.*

*Read important announcement
on the following pages.*

Mr. and Mrs. George Randolph Chester at work on the manuscript of "The Ball of Fire"—*Photograph by P. A. Juley, N. Y.*



New York, July 12th, 1913

My Dear Ray Long:

Mrs. Chester has been my collaborator for two years, working as hard as I have worked and putting as much into the stories as I have put into them. Sometimes, I fancy, more. She is responsible for many of the bright lines, and more of the bright situations, even in the stories which were particularly my own.

I thought it would be a good idea to reveal this in connection with this story, and am going to let you have the benefit of the first announcement. For our future work—that is to say, novels—will bear the dual signature. I would not tell you this, however, until "The Ball of Fire" was completed. As soon as we had put "finis" to it, I knew that it was the work that showed the best of us both.

"The Ball of Fire" is a big book—I am absolutely confident of it; and it is big because of the things it DOES NOT say.

Mr. Ray Long, Editor,
The Red Book Magazine
Chicago, Ill.

Yours cordially,

George Randolph Chester

"The Ball of Fire"



is the title of the
**New
American Novel**

by
**George Randolph Chester
and Lillian Chester**

which will begin in the
October issue of



The Red Book Magazine

¶ This is the first work Mr. and Mrs. Chester have considered *big* enough to use as the medium of announcement of their collaboration. It is far and away the most important piece of work that has come from the pen of George Randolph Chester.

¶ "Wallingford" made him famous, because it introduced the get-rich-quick man to literature, and because it brought into fiction a freshness of humor that had not been equaled since Mark Twain.

¶ "Bobby Burnitt" won, because it presented the fascinating combination of a father who, before death, foresaw and set down all the mistakes his son would make with his fortune, and the winning fight of the young man for manhood and a girl.

¶ "Five Thousand an Hour" was absorbing, because it dealt with a characteristically American in a characteristically American race to win a fortune for himself, and, in so doing, to win the one woman.

¶ "Cordelia Blossom" is beloved of fiction readers because she uses the new feminine field of activity, politics, in a way that puts the finesse and scheming of men politicians to shame.

"THE BALL OF FIRE"

has in it all the elements that "made" these other stories, but it has more: *a big seriousness of purpose*. It might be called the first really serious Chester work. With a courage that is bound to win admiration, it

attacks the high finance that thinks nothing of creating panics to gain its ends, and the sophistries of the church of to-day.

Q In every line you see the Chester who could create "Wallingford" and "Cordelia," but a Chester ripened by age and experience: a man who has studied his country and his people, and has had the daring to jab his pen straight into their faults and hold them up for all to see.

Q In every line you feel, also, the influence of the woman at his elbow in collaboration. There are turns of phrasing which could come only from the feminine mind.

Q It has the Chesteresque sharpness of wit—several points will remind you of the earlier "Wallingford" stories—but there is a spirit to "The Ball of Fire" which would not have been possible when those stories were written.

Q The novel opens with the meeting of the vestrymen of the richest church in New York quarreling over a fifty-million-dollar deal. Among them comes Gail Sargent, fresh from a small inland city, but dazzling in her beauty and in the daring of her speech. At her inspiration, Wall Street gets the biggest shock of its life, and religion is brought face to face with big problems. She is the most fascinating woman character Mr. Chester has created.

Q In presenting this novel in serial form *The Red Book Magazine* breaks all precedents. On occasion, other publications have run two serials simultaneously, but none has ever gone beyond. The addition of this one to *The Red Book's* list begins the simultaneous publication of

The Three Greatest Novels of Modern Times

Q For the October issue will carry, in addition to "The Ball of Fire," Rupert Hughes' story of New York life.

"WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY?"

which is already being recognized as the greatest contemporaneous American novel, and

"THE PASSIONATE FRIENDS"

in which H. G. Wells, the English writer, has set down in intimate style the overwhelming perplexities of a man in love with another's wife.

Q There will also be fourteen short stories of the sort that placed *The Red Book Magazine* at the top of fiction magazines, even before it began the publication of novels in serial form.

The October number of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE will be on sale at every news-stand in the country on the morning of September 23rd
Price 15 Cents

SEPTEMBER RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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TWO GREAT NOVELS IN SERIAL FORM

- What Will People Say?** ----- **Rupert Hughes** ----- 818
The great novel of New York life. Persis Cabot, society queen, finds herself falling in love at last.
Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg
- The Passionate Friends** ----- **H. G. Wells** ----- 892
An absorbing novel by the great English thinker and writer. Lady Mary marries and Stephen goes away to war.
Illustrated by John Newton Howitt

FIFTEEN SHORT STORIES BY ALL STAR WRITERS

- The Broken Shoelace** ----- **Irvin S. Cobb** ----- 802
The first of the new stories of Manhattan by the author of the famous "Judge Priest" and "Adventure Island" stories.
Illustrated by Will Greff
- When Hall Was Young** ----- **Frederick R. Bechdolt** ----- 841
The story of a fight for as fine a bunch of pelts as bull seal or woman of fashion ever wore.
Illustrated by Douglas Duer
- Almost Sixteen** ----- **Ida M. Evans** ----- 851
The latest story from the pen of a woman writer who is hailed as "the discovery of the year."
Illustrated by J. A. Wilson
- Corncob Kelly's Benefit** ----- **Peter B. Kyne** ----- 862
A tale of the most unusual of race-track characters, an honest jockey. It's a XXX story.
Illustrated by Dan Sayre Groesbeck
- Barbara's Legacy** ----- **Owen Oliver** ----- 875
Would money bring you happiness? Most of us answer, "Yes." This story may make you wonder.
Illustrated by Alexander Popini
- The "Younger Set" in Pembina** ----- **Walter Jones** ----- 882
You learn what makes a girl a "has been" in a town where only a dozen of the fellows own dress suits.
Illustrated by William Van Dresser
- A Change of Beer** ----- **Clifford S. Raymond** ----- 912
A phase of life after dark in one of the streets most of us avoid in the big cities.
Illustrated by H. J. Moraw
- A Son of Kazan** ----- **James Oliver Curwood** ----- 919
Another great story of the wolf-dog and his wild, blind mate in the wilderness.
Illustrated by Frank B. Hoffman
- Dear Knows** ----- **Alma Martin Estabrook** ----- 929
Is a girl, no matter how well equipped, ever able to cope with a man, when she herself is the prize?
Illustrated by Robert A. Graef
- Promised Lands** ----- **John Barton Oxford** ----- 940
Each of us has his own "Promised Land." But will it satisfy us if we ever attain it?
Illustrated by Grant T. Reynard
- In Bloodstone Onyx** ----- **L. J. Beeston** ----- 945
When a thief reforms, his greatest fear is of his old comrades. That's what makes this story big.
Illustrated by M. Leone Bracker
- The Best Years of Her Life** ----- **Carolyn Shipman** ----- 952
The great problem of a young woman married to an older man and really in love with another. What shall she do?
Illustrated by R. F. James
- Philo Gubb and the Chicken** ----- **Ellis Parker Butler** ----- 961
The latest of the new series of stories by the greatest humorist in the United States.
Illustrated by Rea Irvin
- A Slice of Broadway** ----- **W. Carey Wonderly** ----- 972
This is not the Broadway most of us read about—it's the real article, done by one who knows.
Illustrated by Coyle C. Tincher
- That Little Word "If"** ----- **Eugene P. Lyle, Jr.** ----- 986
A young man faced with the biggest crisis in his life. It's an absorbingly swift-moving story.
Illustrated by Gayle Hoskins

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IMPORTANT NOTICE: Do not subscribe to THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE through agents unknown to you personally, or you may find yourself defrauded. Many complaints are received from people who have paid cash to some swindler, in which event, of course, the subscription never reaches this office.

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealer after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated.


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MARY BOLAND

Born in Detroit, Jan. 20th, 1880. Appeared first in 1901 as Elinor Burnham in "A Social Highwayman." After several years in stock she became leading woman for Robert Edeson and later for Dustin Farnum, and since 1908 has been leading woman for John Drew.

Photograph by Sarony, New York



LILLIAN RUSSELL

Born in Clinton, Ia., Dec. 4th, 1861. Made her first professional appearance in "H. M. S. Pinafore," in 1878. She played successfully at Tony Pastor's Theatre and for years was one of the most successful figures in light opera. By many she is regarded as the most beautiful woman on our stage.

*Photograph copyrighted by Straus-Peyton Studio,
Kansas City*



MARGARET ANGLIN

Born in Ottawa, April 3rd, 1876. When a pupil in the Empire Dramatic School, she attracted the attention of Charles Frohman and accepted his offer of a part in "Shenandoah." Afterwards she became leading woman in his Empire Stock Co. She has starred in many plays, and won lasting fame as co-star with Henry Miller in "The Great Divide."

Photograph by Strauss-Peyton Studio, Kansas City



MARIE DORO

(as Oliver, in "Oliver Twist")
Born in Duncannon, Pa., May 25th, 1882. Made her first appearance on the stage as Katherine in "Aristocracy" at St. Paul, June 9th, 1901. Later she became leading woman for William Gillette and one season for William Collier. She became a star Oct. 7th, 1907, as Carlotta in "The Morals of Marcus."

Photograph by White, New York



PAULINE FREDERICK

Born in Boston, Aug. 12th, 1884. Made her debut at the Knickerbocker Theatre, New York, in September, 1902, with "The Rogers Brothers in Harvard." After a few years in musical comedy she entered the "legitimate" drama, and recently won her biggest success as Potiphar's Wife in "Joseph and His Brethren."

Photograph copyrighted by Sarony, New York



OLIVE WYNDHAM

First won attention in "The Man From Home," 1907; spent the season of 1909-10 as a member of the New Theatre Company, New York. In September, 1912, she entered musical comedy in the title-character of "The Girl at the Gate." Later last season she played the wife in "Chains," and then starred in Owen Davis' "What Happened to Mary."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



JANET BEECHER

First won attention in Clyde Fitch's comedy, "The Bachelor," in support of Charles Cherry, in 1909. She attained success as the wife in "The Concert," in 1910. In September, 1912, she assumed the principal woman's role in "The Man Higher up," and early this year entered musical comedy as the Empress Josephine in "The Purple Road."

Photograph by Sarony, New York



ELSIE FERGUSON

Born in New York, August 19th, 1883. Made her first appearance in "The Liberty Belles," in 1901, and in 1909 made a pronounced success in the leading role in "Such a Little Queen." She made another distinct success in 1911 as Dolly Madison in "The First Lady of the Land."

Photograph by White, New York



EFFIE SHANNON

Born in Cambridge, Mass., May 13th, 1869. Made her first stage appearance as Eva in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." She became co-star with her husband, Herbert Kelcey, in "The Moth and the Flame," in 1898, and they appeared in many plays together. Last season she made the biggest success of her career as Mrs. Howard in "Years of Discretion."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



CHARLOTTE WALKER

Born in Galveston, Texas, Dec. 29th, 1878. Made her first stage appearance in 1893. She made a big impression as Virginia Carvel in "The Crisis," and later scored a big success as Agatha in "The Warrens of Virginia." She is the wife of Eugene Walter, the playwright, and appears nowadays in plays written for her by Mr. Walter.

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



"This way," said Tremarra. "It will be short and sharp." "What's the good?" queried Wildish.
"Twelve bloodstone onyx cameos by Pistrucci. We will divide the set."
—From L. J. Beesten's story, "In Bloodstone Onyx," page 245

September
1913

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

Vol. XXI
No. 5

RAY LONG, Editor

KEEPING UP THE PACE!



S PROMISED, this issue of the Red Book adds to our all-star list of writers Irvin S. Cobb, the biggest star in the short story field. "The Broken Shoelace," beginning on the next page, is the first of several stories he is writing for us. And this is the first series he has ever consented to write for any publication except the Saturday Evening Post.

With the novels by Rupert Hughes and H. G. Wells and short stories by such stars as Peter B. Kyne, Carolyn Shipman, James Oliver Curwood, Frederick R. Bechdolt and the ten others who figure on the contents page, this number excels even the August Red Book, and that certainly established a new record in magazine making.

The October issue will add still another of the big fellows to our list—George Randolph Chester, creator of Wallingford and Cordelia Blossom. Not only that. His novel, "The Ball of Fire," will bear the signature of Lillian Chester, his wife, as collaborator. Mr. Chester explains that she has shared in writing his stories for two years, but this novel is so *big*—he considers it his strongest work—that he insists upon her sharing the credit.

The story opens with the usual unusual Chesteresque situation: a country girl, the most fascinating woman Chester has pictured, rebuking the millionaire vestrymen of the wealthiest church in New York as they sit in debate over a fifty-million dollar deal. You'll follow every line with a thrill you haven't felt since you saw your first airship in flight.

Figure it over—Hughes, Wells, Chester, and fifteen all-star short story writers with their best work in the October issue—and you'll see why the Red Book is the most talked-of magazine in America to-day.

The BROKEN

The first of a new series of short stories by the author of "Judge Priest" and "Adventure Island"

By Irvin S. Cobb

THE great charm of an Irvin Cobb story is the manner in which he "sets his stage." There is always a big plot, but he takes no short cuts to the end. With his leisurely style—Cobb actually has a "Southern accent" in his writing—he leads you into unfrequented places of thought; and with his whimsically keen observation, makes you see as he has seen. That is why his stories of the South and of New York have made him the biggest of all the stars among short-story writers. For instance, in this tale,—it's a story of New York,—the incident of the tramp and the thousand-dollar bill, by itself, would be a piece of workmanship to give most writers pride. And it's only one spot in the story.

IN the aching, baking middle of a sizzling New York summer, there befell New York's regular "crime wave." When the city is a brazen skillet, whereon mankind, assailed by the sun from above and by the stored-up heat from below, fries on both sides like an egg; when nerves are worn to frazzle-ends; when men and women, suffocating by tedious degrees in the packed and steaming tenements, lie there and curse the day they were born—then comes the annual "crime wave," as the papers love to name it. In truth the papers make it first and then they name it. Misdeeds of great and small degree are ranged together and displayed in parallel columns as common symptoms of a high tide of violence, a perfect ground swell of lawlessness. To a city editor the scope of a crime wave is as elastic a thing as a hot weather "story," when under the heading of Heat Prostrations are listed all who fall in the streets, stricken by whatsoever cause. This is done as a sop to local pride, proving New York to be a deadlier spot in summer than Chicago or St. Louis.

True enough, in such a season, people do have shorter tempers that at other times; they come to blows on small provocation and come to words on still less. So maybe there was a real "crime wave," making men bloody-minded and homicidal. Be that as it may, the thing reached its apogee in the murder of old Steinway, the so-called millionaire miser of Murray Hill, he being called a millionaire because he had money, and a miser because he saved it.

It was in mid-August that the aged Steinway was choked to death in his rubbishy old house in East Thirty-ninth Street, where by the current rumor of the neighborhood, he kept large sums in cash. Suspicion fell upon the recluse's nephew, one Maxwell, who vanished with the discovery of the murder.

The police compiled and widely circulated a description of the suspect, his looks, manners, habits and peculiarities; and certain distant relatives and presumptive heirs of the dead man came forward promptly, offering a lump sum in cash for his capture, living; but all this labor was without reward. The fugitive went uncaptured, while the

SHOELACE

Illustrated

By
Will
Grefé



summer dragged on to its end, burning up in the fiery furnace of its own heat.

For one dweller of the city—and he, I may tell you, is the central figure in this story—it dragged on with particular slowness. Judson Green, the hero of our tale—if it has any hero—was a young man of some wealth and more leisure. Also he was a young man of theories. For example, he had a theory that around every corner of every great city romance lurked, ready for some one to come and find it. True, he never had found it, but that, he insisted, was because he hadn't looked for it; it was there all right, waiting to be flushed, like a quail from a covert.

Voicing this belief over a drink at a club, on an evening in June, he had been challenged promptly by one of those argumentative persons who invariably disagree with every proposition as a matter of principle, and for the sake of the debate.

"All rot, Green," the other man had said. "Just plain rot. Adventure's not a thing that you find yourself. It's something that comes and finds you—once in a life-time. I'll bet that in three months of trying you couldn't, to save your life, have a real adventure in this town—I mean an adventure out of the



He saw that which held him petrified in his pose.

ordinary. Elopements and automobile smash-ups are barred."

"How much will you bet?" asked Judson Green.

"A hundred," said the other man, whose name was Wainright.

Reaching with one hand for his fountain pen, Judson Green beckoned a waiter with the other and told him to bring a couple of blank checks.

So that was how it had started, and that was why Judson Green had spent the summer in New York instead of running away to the north woods or the

New England shore, as nearly everybody he knew did. Diligently had he sought to win that hundred dollars of the contentious Wainright; diligently had he ranged from one end of New York to the other, seeking queer people and queer things—seeking anything that might properly be said to constitute adventure. Sometimes a mildly interested and mildly satirical friend accompanied him; oftener he went alone, an earnest and determined young man. Yet, whether with company or without it, his luck uniformly was poor. The founts of casual adventure had, it seemed, run stone dry; such weather was enough to dry up anything.

Yet he had faithfully tried all those formulas which in the past were supposed to have served the turns of those seeking adventure in a great city. There was the trick of bestowing a thousand-dollar bill upon a chance vagrant and then trailing after the recipient to note what happened to him, in his efforts to change the bill. Heretofore, in fiction at least, the following of this plan had invariably brought forth most beautiful results. Accordingly Judson Green tried it.

He tried it at Coney Island one July evening. He chose Coney Island deliberately, because of all the places under the sun, Coney Island is pre-eminently the home and haunt of the North American dime. At Coney, a dime will buy almost anything except what a half-dime will buy. On Surf Avenue, then, which is Coney's Greatest Common Divisor, he strolled back and forth, looking for one of an aspect suitable for this experiment. Mountain gorges of painted canvas and sheet-tin towered above him; palace pinnacles of lath and plaster speared the sky; the moist salt air, blowing in from the adjacent sea, was enriched with dust and with smells of hot sausages and fried crabs, and was shattered by the bray of bagpipes, the exact and mechanical melodies of steam organs, and the insistent, compelling, never-dying blat of the spieler, the barker and the ballyhoo. Also there were perhaps a hundred thousand other smells and noises, did one care to take

the time and trouble to classify them. And here the very man he sought to find, found him.

There came to him, seeking alms, one who was a thing of shreds and patches and broken shoes. His rags seemed to adhere to him by the power of cohesive friction rather than by any visible attachments; it might have been years since he had a hat that had a brim. It was in the faint and hungered whine of the professional that he asked for the money to buy one cup of coffee; yet as he spoke, his breath had the rich alcoholic fragrance of a hot plum pudding with brandy sauce.

The beggar made his plea and, with a dirty palm outstretched, waited in patient supplianee. He sustained the surprise of his whole panhandling life. He was handed a new, uncreased one-thousand-dollar bill. He was told that he must undertake to change the bill and spend small fractional parts of it. Succeeding here, he should have five per cent of it for his own. As Judson Green impressed these details upon the ragged vagrant's dazed understanding, he edged closer and closer to his man, ready to cut off any sudden attempt at flight.

The precaution was entirely unnecessary. Perhaps it was because this particular panhandler had the honor of his profession—in moments of confidence he might have told you, with some pride, that he was no thief. Or possibly the possession of such unheard of wealth crippled his powers of imagination. There are people who are made financially embarrassed by having no money at all, but more who are made so by having too much. Our most expensive hotels are full of whole families, who, having become unexpectedly and abruptly wealthy, are now suffering from this painful form of financial embarrassment; they wish to disburse large sums freely and gracefully, and they don't know how. They lack the requisite training. In a way of speaking, this mendicant of Coney Island was perhaps of this class. With his jaw lolling, he looked at the stranger dubiously, uncertainly, suspiciously, meanwhile studying the stranger's yellow-back.

"You want me to git this here bill changed?" he said dully.

"That is the idea," said Judson Green, patiently. "You are to take it and change it—and I will trail behind you to see what happens. I'm merely making an experiment, with your help, and I'm willing to pay for it."

"This money aint counterfeit?" inquired the raggedy one. "This aint no game to git me in bad?"

"Well, isn't it worth taking a chance on?" cross-fired Green. The pimpled expanse of face lost some of its doubt, and the owner of the face fetched a deep breath.

"You're on," he decided. "Where 'bouts'll I start?"

"Anywhere you please," Judson Green told him. "You said you were hungry—that for two days you hadn't eaten a bite?"

"Aw, boss, that was part of the spiel," he confessed frankly. "Right now I'm that full of beef stew I couldn't hold another bite."

"Well, how about a drink? A long, cool glass of beer, say? Or anything you please."

The temporary custodian of the one-thousand-dollar bill mentally considered this pleasing project; his bleared eye glinted brighter.

"Naw," he said, "not jist yit. If it's all the same to you, boss, I'll wait until I gits a good thirst on me. I think I'll go into that show yonder, to start on." He pointed a finger towards a near-by amusement enterprise. This institution had opened years before as "The Galveston Flood." Then, with some small scenic changes, it had become "The Mount Pelee Disaster," warranted historically correct in all details; now it was "The Messina Earthquake," no less. Its red and gold gullet of an entrance yawned hungrily, not twenty yards from where they stood.

"Go ahead," ordered Judson Green, confirming the choice with a nod. "And remember, my friend, I will be right behind you."

Nothing, however, seemed further from the panhandler's thoughts than flight. His rags fluttered freely in the

evening air and his soleless shoes flopped up and down upon his feet, rasping his bare toes, as he approached the nearest ticket booth.

Behind the wicket sat a young woman of much self-possession. By all the outward signs she was a born and bred metropolitan and therefore one steeled against surprise and armed mentally against trick and device. Even before she spoke you felt sure she would say *oily* if she meant *early*, and *early* if she meant *oily*—sure linguistic marks of the native-born New York cockney.

To match the environment of her employment she wore a costume that was fondly presumed to be the correct garbing of a Sicilian peasant maid, including a brilliant bodice that laced in front and buttoned behind, an imposing head-dress, and on both her arms, bracelets of the better known semi-precious metals.

Coming boldly up to her, the ragged man laid upon the shelf of the wicket his precious bill—it was now waddled into a greenish-yellow wisp like a sprig of celery top—and said simply, "One!"

With a jangle of her wrist jewelry, the young woman drew the bill in under the bars and straightened it out in front of her. She considered with widening gaze, the numeral 1 and the three naughts following it. Then through the bars she considered carefully him who had brought it. From one to the other and back again she looked.

"Woit one minute," she said. It is impossible to reproduce in cold type the manner in which this young woman uttered the word *minute*. But there was an "o" in it and a labial hint of an extra "u."

"Woit, please," she said again, and holding the bill down flat with one hand she turned and beckoned to some one at her left.

A pace behind the panhandler, Judson Green watched. Now the big comedy scene was coming, just as it always came in the books. Either the tattered possessor of the one-thousand-dollar bill would be made welcome by a gratified proprietor and would be given the liberty of the entire island and would have

faces of those who streamed past him.

His roving eye fell upon a splendid badge of gold enamel gleaming against a background of blue serge, and his face lighted with the joy of one meeting a most dear friend in a distant land. Shifting his umbrella from the right hand to the left, he gave three successive and careful tugs at his right coat lapel, all the while facing Judson Green. Following this he made a military salute and then, stepping two paces forward, he undertook to engage Green's hand in a peculiar and difficult cross-fingered clasp. And he uttered cabalistic words of greeting in some strange tongue, all the while beaming gladly.

In less than no time, though, his warmth all changed to indignation; and as Green backed away, retreating in poor order and some embarrassment, he gathered from certain remarks thrown after him, that the outraged brother from Enid was threatening him with arrest and prosecution as a rank impostor—for wearing, without authority, the sacred insignia of an Imperial Past Potentate of the Supreme Order of Knightly Somethings or Other—he didn't catch the last words, being then in full flight. So the adventure-seeker counted that day lost too, and buried the Oriental emblem at the bottom of a bureau drawer to keep it out of mischief.

He read the papers closely, seeking there the seeds of adventure. In one of them, a pathetic story appeared, telling of a once famous soldier of fortune starving in a tenement on Rivington street, a man who in his day—so the papers said—had made rulers and unmade them, had helped to alter the map of more than one continent. Green investigated personally. The tale turned out to be nine-tenths reporter's imagination, and one-tenth, a garrulous, unreliable old man.

In another paper was an advertisement richly laden with veiled pleadings for immediate aid from a young woman who described herself as being in great danger. He looked into this too, but stopped looking, when he ran into an affable and accommodating press-agent.

The imperiled young lady was connected with the drama, it seemed, and she sought free advertisement and was willing to go pretty far to get it.

Coming away from a roof garden show one steaming night, a slinky looking, slightly lame person asked Green for the time, and as Green reached for his watch he endeavored to pick Green's pocket. Being thwarted in this, the slinky person made slowly off. A *Van Bibber* would have hired vigilant aides to dog the footsteps of the disappointed thief and by harrying him forth with threats from wherever he stopped, would speedily have driven him desperate from lack of sleep and lack of food. Green had read somewhere of this very thing having been done successfully. He patterned after the plan. He trailed the gimpy one to where he mainly abided and drove him out of one lunchroom, and dispossessed him from one lodging house; and at that, giving his pursuer malevolent looks, the "dip" went limping to the Grand Central and caught the first train leaving for the West.

And then, at the fog end of the summer, when all his well-laid plans had one by one gone agley, chance brought to Green an adventure—sheer chance and a real adventure. The circumstance of a deranged automobile was largely responsible—that and the added incident of a broken shoe-string.

It was in the first week in September and Judson Green, a tired, badly sunburned young man, disappointed and fagged, looked forward ten days to the expiration of the three months, when confessing himself beaten, and what was worse, wrong, he must pay over one hundred dollars to the jubilant Wainright. With him it wasn't the money—he had already spent the amount of the wager several times over in the prosecution of his vain campaigning after adventure—it was the upsetting of his pet theory; that was the worst part of it.

I believe I stated a little earlier in this narrative that Judson Green was a young man of profoundly professed theories. It came to pass, therefore, that

on the Saturday before Labor Day, Judson Green, being very much out of sorts, found himself very much alone and didn't know what to do with himself. He thought of the beaches, but dismissed the thought. Of a Saturday afternoon in the season, the sea beaches that lie within the city bounds are a-crawl with humans. There is small pleasure in surf-bathing where you must share every wave with from one to a dozen total strangers.

Mr. Green climbed into his car and told his driver to take him to Van Cortlandt Park, which, lying at the northernmost boundaries of New York City, had come, with successive northerly shifts of the center of population, to be the city's chief playground.

When, by reason of a confusion of tongues, work was knocked off on the Tower of Babel, if then all hands had turned to outdoor sports, the resultant scene would have been, I imagine, much like the picture that is presented on most Saturdays on the sixty-acre stretch of turf known as Indian Field, up in Van Cortlandt Park. Here there are baseball games by the hundred and football games by the score—all the known varieties of football games too, Gaelic, Soccer, Rugby and others; and coal black West Indian negroes in white flannels, with their legs buskined like the legs of comic opera brigands, play at cricket, meanwhile shouting in the broadest of British accents; and there is tennis on the tennis courts and boating on the lake near-by and golf on the links that lie beyond the lake. Also, in odd corners, there are all manners of queer Scandinavian and Latin games, for which no one seems to know the name; and on occasion, there are polo matches.

Accordingly, when his car drew up at the edge of the parking space, our young man beheld a wide assortment of sporting events spread before his eyes. The players disported themselves with enthusiasm, for there was now a soft coolness in the air. But the scars of a brutal summer still showed, in the turf that was burnt brown and crisp, and in the withered leaves on the elms, and in white dust inches deep on the roadways.

Young Mr. Green sat at his ease and looked until he was tired of looking, and then he gave the order for a home-bound spin. Right here was where chance stepped in and diverted him from his appointed paths. For the car, now turned cityward, had rolled but a few rods when a smell of overheated metals assailed the air, and with a tired wheezing somewhere down in its vital organs, the automobile halted itself. The chauffeur spent some time tinkering among its innermost works before he stood up, hot and sweaty and disgusted, to announce that the breakdown was serious in character. He undertook to explain in highly technical terms the exact nature of the trouble, but his master had no turn for mechanics and small patience for listening. He gathered that it would take at least an hour to mend the mishap, perhaps even longer, and he was not minded to wait.

"I'll walk across yonder and catch the subway," he said. "You mend the car and bring it downtown when you get it mended."

At its farthest point north, the Broadway subway, belying its name, emerges from the earth and becomes an elevated structure, rearing high above the ground. Its northermost station stands aloft, butt-ended and pierced with many windows, like a ferry-boat cabin set up on stilts. Through a long aisle of sundried trees, Judson Green made for this newly risen landmark. A year or two years before, all this district had been well wooded and sparsely inhabited. But wherever a transit line goes in New York it works changes in the immediate surroundings, and here at this particular spot, the subway was working them, and many of them. Through truck patches and strips of woodland, cross-streets were being cut, and on the hills to the westward, tall apartment houses were going up. On the raw edge of a cut, half of an old wooden mansion stood, showing tattered strips of an ancient flowered wallpaper and a fireplace, clinging like a chimney-swift's nest to a wall, where the rest of the room had been sheared away bodily. Along Broadway, beyond a huddle of merry-go-

rounds and peanut stands, a row of shops had sprung up, as it were, overnight; they were shiny, trim, citified shops, looking a trifle strange now in this half-transformed setting, but sure to have plenty of neighbors before long. There was even a barber shop, glittering inside and out with the neatness of newness, and complete, even to a manicuring table and a shoe-shining stand. The door of the shop was open; within, electric fans whirled in little blurs of rapid movement.

See now how chance still served our young man: Crossing to the station, Judson Green took note of this barber shop and took note also that his russet shoes had suffered from his trudge through the dusty park. Likewise one of the silken strings had frayed through; the broken end stood up through the top eyelet in an untidy fringed effect. So he turned off short and went into the little place and mounted the new tall chair that stood just inside the door. The only other customer in the place was in the act of leaving. This customer got up from the manicure table opposite the shoe-shining stand, slipped a coin into the palm of the manicure girl and passed out, giving Green a brief profile view of a thin, bearded face. Behind the back of her departing patron, the manicure girl shrugged her shoulders inside of an ornate bodice and screwed up her nose derisively. It was plainly to be seen that she did not care greatly for him she had just served.

From where he was languidly honing a razor, the head barber, he who presided over the first of the row of three chairs, spoke:

"You ought'n'ter be making faces at your regular steadies, Sadie. If you was to ask me, I think you've got a mash on that there gent."

The young person thus addressed shook her head with a sprightly motion.

"Not on your life," she answered. "There's certainly something about that man I don't like."

"It don't never pay to knock a stand-by," opined the head barber, banteringly.

As though seeking sympathy from these gibes, the young lady denominated as Sadie turned toward the well-dressed, alert looking young man who had just come in. Apparently he impressed her as a person in whom she might confide.

"Speaking about the fella that just went out," she said. "August yonder is all the time trying to guy me about him. I should worry! He aint my style. Honest, I think he's nutty."

Politely Green uttered one of those non-committal sounds that may be taken to mean almost anything. But the manicure lady was of a temperament needing no prompting. She went on, blithe to be talking to a new listener.

"Yes, sir, I think he's plumb dippy. He first came in here about two weeks ago to have his nails did, and I don't know whether you'll believe it or not—but August'll tell you it's the truth—he's been back here every day since. And the funniest part of it is I'm certain sure he never had his nails done in his life before then—they was certainly in a untidy state the first time he came. And there's another peculiar thing about him. He always makes me scrape away down under his nails, right to the quick. Sometimes they bleed and it must hurt him."

"Apparently the gentleman has the manicuring habit in a serious form," said Green, seeing that Miss Sadie had paused, in expectation of an answer from him.

"He sure has—in the most vi'lent form," she agreed. "He's got other habits too. He's sure badly stuck on the movies."

"I beg your pardon—on the what?"

"On the movies—the moving pictures," she explained. "Well, oncet in a while I enjoy a good fillum myself, but I'm no bigot on the subject—I can take my movies or I can let 'em be. But not that man that just now went out. All the time I'm doing his nails he don't talk about nothing else hardly, except the moving pictures he's seen that day or the day before. It's right ridiculous, him being a grown-up man and everything. I actually believe he never misses a new fillum at that new

moving picture place three doors above here, or at that other one, that's opened up down by Two Hundred an' Thirtieth Street. He seems to patronize just those two. I guess he lives 'round here somewhere. Yet he don't seem to be very well acquainted in this part of town neither. Well, it sure takes all kind of people to make a world, don't it?"

Temporarily Miss Sadie lapsed into silence, never noticing that what she said had caused her chief auditor to bend forward in absorbed interest. He sat with his eyes on the Greek youth who worked over his shoes, but his mind was busy with certain most interesting speculations.

When the bootblack had given his restored and resplendent russets a final loving rub, and had deftly inserted a new lace where the old one had been, Mr. Green decided that he needed a manicure and he moved across the shop, and as the manicure lady worked upon his nails he siphoned the shallow reservoir of her little mind as dry as a bone. The job required no great amount of pump-work either, for this Miss Sadie dearly loved the sound of her own voice and was gratefully glad to tell him all she knew of the stranger who favored such painful manicuring processes and who so enjoyed a moving picture show. For his part, Green had seen only the man's side face, and that casually and at a fleeting glance; but before the young lady was through with her description, he knew the other's deportment and contour as though he had passed him a hundred times and each time had closely studied him.

To begin with, the man was sallow and dark, and his age was perhaps thirty, or at most thirty-two or three. His beard was newly grown; it was a young beard, through which his chin and chops still showed. He smoked cigarettes constantly—the thumb and forefinger of his right hand were stained almost black, and Miss Sadie, having the pride of her craft, had several times tried unsuccessfully to bleach them of their nicotine disfigurements.

He had a manner about him which the girl described as "kind of suspicious

and scary,"—by which Green took her to mean that he was shy and perhaps furtive in his bearing. His teeth, his eyes, his expression, his mode of dress—Mr. Green knew them all before Miss Sadie gave his left hand a gentle pat as a sign that the job was concluded. He tipped her generously and caught the next subway train going south.

South-bound subway trains run fast, especially when the rush of traffic is northward. Within the hour Judson Green sat in the reading room of his club, industriously turning the pages of the club's file of the *World* for the past month. Presently he found what he was seeking. He read a while, and for a while then he took notes. Pocketing his notes, he ate dinner alone and in due season thereafter he went home and to bed. But before this, he sent off a night lettergram to the Byrnes private detective agency down in Park Row. He wanted—so in effect the message ran—the best man in the employ of that concern to call upon him at his bachelor apartments in the Hotel Sedgwick, in the morning at ten o'clock. The matter was urgent, important—and confidential.

If the man who knocked at Green's sitting-room door that next morning at ten was not the best man of the Byrnes staff he looked the part. He was square-jawed, with an appraising eye and a good pair of shoulders. He had the right kind of a name for a detective, too. The name was Cassidy—Michael J.

"Mr. Cassidy," said Judson Green, when the preliminaries of introduction were over, "you remember, don't you, what the papers said at the time of the Steinway murder about the suspect Maxwell, the old man's nephew—the description they printed of him, and all?"

"I ought to," said Cassidy. "Our people had that case from the start—I worked on it myself off and on, up until three days ago." From memory he quoted: "Medium height, slender, dark-complected, smooth-faced and about thirty-one years old; a good dresser and well educated; smokes cigarettes constantly; has one upper front tooth crowned with gold—" He hesitated,

searching his memory for more details.

"Remember anything else about him that was striking?" prompted Green.

"Let's see?" pondered Mr. Cassidy. Then after a little pause, "No, that's all I seem to recall right now."

"How about his being a patron of moving pictures?"

"That's right," agreed the other, "that's the only part of it I forgot."

He repeated pretty exactly the language of the concluding paragraph of the official police circular that all the papers had carried for days: "Formerly addicted to reading cheap and sensational novels, now an inveterate attendant of motion-picture theatres." He glanced at Judson Green over his cigar. "What's the idea?" he asked. "Know something about this case?"

"Not much," said Green, "except that I have found the man who killed old Steinway."

Forgetting his professional gravity, up rose Mr. Cassidy, and his chair, which had been tilted back, brought its forelegs to the floor with a thump.

"No?" he said, half-incredulously, half-hopefully.

"Yes," stated Mr. Green calmly. "At least I've found Maxwell. Or anyway, I think I have."

Long before he was through telling what he had seen and heard the afternoon before, Mr. Cassidy, surnamed Michael J., was almost sitting in his lap. When the younger man had finished his tale the detective fetched a deep and happy breath.

"It sounds good to me," he commented, "it certainly sounds to me like you've got the right dope on this party. But listen, Mr. Green, how do you figure in this here party's fad for getting himself manicured as a part of the layout—I can see it all but that?"

"Here is how I deduced that element of the case," stated Green. "Conceding this man to be the fugitive Maxwell, it is quite evident that he has a highly developed imagination—his former love of trashy literature and his present passion for moving pictures would both seem to prove that. Now then, you remember that all the accounts of that

murder told of the deep marks of finger-nail scratches in the old man's throat. If this man is the murderer, I would say, from what we know of him, that he cannot rid himself of the feeling that the blood of his victim is still under his nails. And so, nursing that delusion, he goes daily to that manicure girl—"

He got no farther along than that. Mr. Cassidy extended his large right hand in a congratulatory clasp, and admiration was writ large upon his face.

"Colonel," he said, "you're immense—you oughter be in the business. Say, when are we going to nail this guy?"

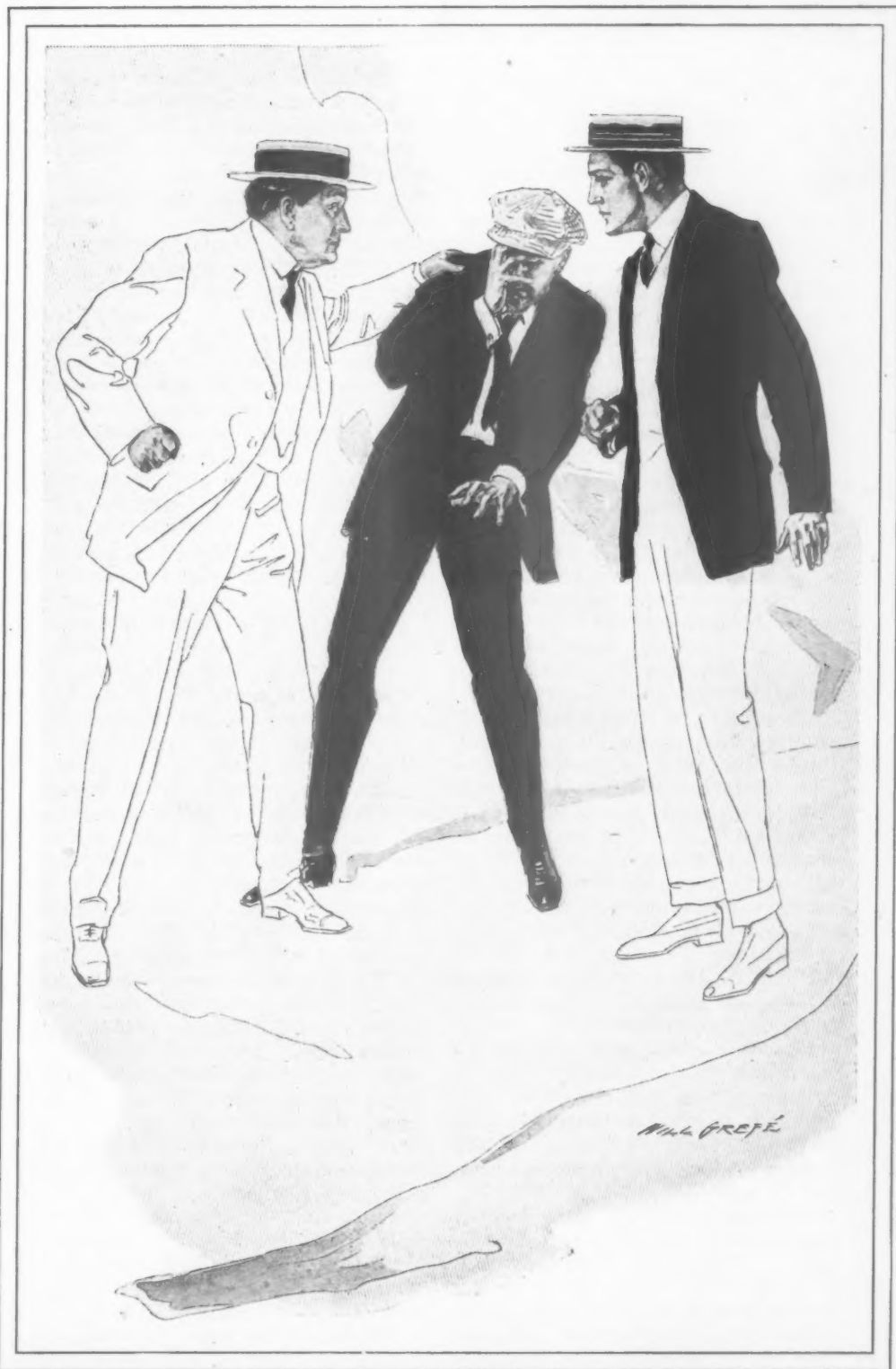
"Well," said Green, "I think we should start watching his movements at once, but we should wait until we are pretty sure of the correctness of our theory before acting. And of course, in the meanwhile, we must deport ourselves in such a way as to avoid arousing his suspicions."

"Just leave that to me. You do the expert thinking on this here case; I'll guarantee a good job of trailing."

Inside of forty-eight hours these two, working discreetly, knew a good deal of their man. For example, they knew that under the name of Morrison he was living in a summer boarding house on a little hill rising to the west of the park; that he had been living there for a little more than a fortnight; that his landlady didn't know his business, but thought that he must be an invalid. Among the other lodgers the impression prevailed that he suffered from a nervous trouble. Mornings, he kept to his room, sleeping until late. In fact, as well as the couple occupying the room below his might judge, he did most of his sleeping in the daytime—they heard him night after night, walking the floor until all hours.

A maid-servant of ultra conversational tendencies gratuitously furnished most of these valued details, after Michael J. Cassidy had succeeded in meeting her socially.

Afternoons, the suspect followed a more or less regular itinerary. He visited the manicure girl at the new barber shop; he patronized one or both of the moving picture places in the vicinity,



"What—what do you want?" he demanded in a shaken, quick voice. "We want a word or two with you," said Cassidy with a sort of threatening emphasis.

but usually both, and then he went for a solitary walk through the park, and along toward dusk he returned to the boarding house, ate his supper and went to his room. He had no friends, apparently; certainly he had no callers. He received no letters and seemingly wrote none. Cassidy was convinced; he burned with eagerness to make the arrest without further delay. For this would be more than a feather in the Cassidy cap; it would be a whole war bonnet.

"You kin stay in the background if you want to," he said. "Believe me, I'm perfectly willing to take all the credit for pulling off this pinch."

As he said this they were passing along Broadway just above the subway terminal. The straggling line of new shops was on one side and the park stretched away on the other. Green was on the inner side of the pavement. Getting no answer to his suggestion, Mr. Cassidy started to repeat it.

"I heard you," said Green, stopping now dead short, directly in front of the resplendent front of the Regal Motion Picture Palace. He contemplated with an apparently unwarranted interest the illuminated and lithographed announcements of the morrow's bill.

"I'm perfectly willing to stay in the background," he said. "But—but I've just this very minute thought of a plan that ought to make us absolutely sure of our man—providing the plan works! Are you at all familiar with the tragedy of 'Macbeth?'"

"I don't know as I am," admitted Mr. Cassidy honestly. "When did it happen and who done it?"

Again his employer seemed not to hear him.

"Let's go into this place," he said, turning in towards the hospitable portals of the Regal. "I want to have a business talk with the proprietor of this establishment, if he's in."

The manager was in, and they had their talk; but after all it was money—which in New York speaks with such a clarion-loud and convincing voice—that did most of the talking. As soon as Judson Green had produced a bill-roll of august proportions, the proprietor,

doubtful until that moment, showed himself to be a man open to all reasonable arguments. Moreover, he presently scented in this enterprise much free advertisement for his place.

On the following afternoon, the weather being rainy, the Regal opened its doors for the three-o'clock performance to an audience that was smaller than common and mostly made up of dependable neighborhood patrons. However, there were at least two newcomers present. They sat side by side, next to the central aisle, in the rearmost row of chairs—Judson Green and Michael J. Cassidy. Their man was almost directly in front of them, perhaps halfway down toward the stage. Above a scattering line of heads of women and children they could see, in the half light of the darkened house, his head and shoulders as he bent his body forward at an interested angle.

Promptly on the hour, a big bull's eye of light flashed on, making a shimmering white target in the middle of the screen. The music started up, and a moving-picture soloist with a moving-picture soloist's voice, appeared in the edge of the illuminated space and rendered a moving-picture ballad having reference to the joys of life down in Old Alabam', where the birds are forever singing in the trees and the cotton-blossoms bloom practically without cessation. This, mercifully, being soon over, a film entitled "The Sheriff's Sweetheart" was offered, and for a time, in shifting pictures, horse-thieves in leather "chaps," and heroes in open-necked shirts, and dashing cow-girls in divided skirts, played out a thrilling drama of the West, while behind them danced and quivered a background labeled Arizona, but suggesting New Jersey. When the dashing and intrepid sheriff had, after many trials, won his lady love, the ballad singer again obliged throatily, and then from his coop in the little gallery the lantern man made announcement, in large, flickering letters, of a film depicting William Shakespeare's play, "Macbeth."

Thereupon scene succeeded scene, unfolding the tragic tale. The ill-fated

Duncan was slain; the *Witches of Endor* capered fearsomely about their fearsome cauldron of snaky, froggy horrors; and then—taking some liberties with the theme as set down by the original author—the operator presented a picture wherein *Macbeth*, tortured by sleeplessness and hag-ridden with remorse, saw, in imagination, the dripping blood upon his hands and vainly sought to scour it off.

Right here too, came another innovation which might or might not have pleased the Bard of Avon. For as *Macbeth* wrestled with his fears, the phantom of the murdered *Duncan*, a cloaked, shadowy shape, crossed slowly by him from right to left, traversing the breadth of the screen, while the orchestra rendered shivery music in appropriate accompaniment.

Midway of the lighted space the ghost raised its averted head and looked out full, not at the quivering *Macbeth*, but, with steady eyes and set, impassive face, into the body of the darkened little theatre. In an instant the sheeted form was gone—gone so quickly that perhaps no keen-eyed juvenile in the audience detected the artifice by which, through a skillful scissoring and grafting and doctoring of the original film, the face of the actor who played the dead and walking *Duncan* had been replaced by the photographed face, printed so often in the newspapers, of murdered Old Man Steinway!

There was a man near the center of the house who got instantly upon his legs and stumbling, indeed almost running in his haste, made up the center aisle for the door; and in the daylight which strengthened as he neared the open, it might be seen that he wore the look of one stunned by a sudden blighting shock. And at once Green and Cassidy were noiselessly up too, and following close behind him, their nerves a-tingle.

All unconscious of surveillance, the suspect was out of the door, on the pavement, when they closed on him. At the touch of Cassidy's big hand upon his shoulder he spun round, staring at them with wide-open, startled eyes.

Above his scraggy beard his face was dappled white and red in patches, and under the mottled skin little muscles twitched visibly.

"What—what do you want?" he demanded in a shaken, quick voice. A gold-capped tooth showed in his upper jaw between his lips.

"We want a word or two with you," said Cassidy, with a sort of threatening emphasis.

"Are you—are you officers?" He got the question out with a separate gulp for each separate word.

"Not exactly," answered Cassidy, and tightened his grip on the other's shoulder the least bit more firmly. "But we can call one mighty easy if you aint satisfied to talk to us a minute or two. There's one yonder."

He ducked his head toward where forty yards distant, a middle-aged and somewhat puffy patrolman was shepherding the traffic that eddied in small whirls about the steps of the subway terminal.

"All right, all right," assented the captive eagerly. "I'll talk to you. Let's go over there—where it's quiet." He pointed a wavering finger, with a glistening, highly polished nail on it, toward the opposite side of the street; there the park came right up to the sidewalk and ended. They went, and in a minute all three of them were grouped close up to the shrub-lined boundary. The mottled-faced man was in the middle. Green stood on one side of him and Cassidy on the other, shouldering up so close that they blocked him off, flank and front.

"Now, then, we're all nice and cozy," said Cassidy with a touch of that irony which a cat often displays, in different form, upon capturing a live mouse. "And we want to ask you a few questions. What's your name—your real name?" he demanded roughly.

"Morrison," said the man, licking with his tongue to moisten his lips.

"Did you say Maxwell?" asked Cassidy, shooting out his syllables hard and straight.

"No, no—I said Morrison." The man looked as though he were going to collapse then and there.

"One name's as good as another, I guess, aint it?" went on the detective. "Well, what's your business?"

"My business?" He was parrying as though seeking time to collect his scattered wits. "Oh, I haven't any business—I've been sick lately."

"Oh, you've been sick lately—well, you look sick right now." Cassidy shoved his hands in his pockets and with a bullying, hectoring air pushed his face with the lower jaw undershot, into the suspect's face. "Say, was it because you felt sick that you came out of that there moving-picture show so sudden?"

Just as he had calculated, the other jumped at the suggestion.

"Yes—yes," he nodded nervously. "That was it—the heat in there made me faint." He braced himself tauter. "Say," he said, and tried to put force into his tones, "what business have you men got spying on me and asking me these things? I'm a free American citizen—"

"Well now, young fellow, that all depends," broke in Cassidy, "that all depends." He sank his voice almost to a whisper, speaking deliberately. "Now tell us why you didn't feel real sick, until you seen your dead uncle's face looking at you—"

"Look out!" screamed the prisoner. He flinched back, pointing with one arm wildly, and flinging up the other across his face as though to shut out a sight of danger. There was a rattle of wheels behind them.

Judson Green pivoted on his heel, with the thought of runaways springing up to his mind. But Mr. Cassidy, wiser in the tricks of the hunter and the hunted, made a darting grab with both hands for the shoulder which he had released. His greedy fingers closed on space. The suspect, with a desperate and unexpected agility, had given his body a backward nimble fling that carried him sprawling through a gap between the ornamental bushes fringing the park sward. Instantly he was up and with never a backward glance, was running across the lower, narrower verge of Indian Field, making for the trees which edged it thickly upon the east. He could

run fast, too. Nor were there men in front to hinder him, since because of the rain, coming down in a thin drizzle, the wide, sloped stretch of turf was for this once bare of ball-players and cricket teams.

Upon the second, Cassidy was through the hedge gap and hot-foot after him, with Green coming along only a pace or two behind. Over his shoulder Cassidy whooped a call for aid to the traffic policeman in the roadway. But that stout person, who had been exiled to these far-away precincts by reason of his increasing girth and a tendency toward fallen arches, only took one or two steps upon his flat feet and then halted, being in doubt as to what it was all about. Before he could make up his mind whether or not to join the chase, it was too late to join it. The fugitive, traveling a straight course, had crossed the field at its narrowest point and had bounded into the fringe of greenery bordering the little lake, heading apparently for the thick swampy place lying between the ball ground and the golf links. The two pursuers legging along behind, did their best to keep him in sight, but, one thing sure, they were not gaining on him.

As a matter of truth, they were losing. Twice they lost him and twice they spied him again—once crossing a bit of open glade, once weaving in and out among the tree trunks farther on. Then they lost him altogether. Cassidy had showed the better pair of legs at the start of the race, but now his wind began to fail him. Panting and blowing fit to shame porpoises, he slackened his speed, falling back inch by inch, while the slighter and younger man took the lead. Green settled to a steady, space-eating jog-trot, all the time watching this way and that. There were singularly few people in sight—only a chronic golfer here and there up on the links—and these incurables merely stared through the rain-drops at him as he forced his way among the thickets below them.

Cassidy, falling farther and farther behind, presently met a mounted policeman ambling his horse along a tree-

shaded roadway that crossed the park from east to west, and between gulps for breath told what he knew. Leaning half out of his saddle, the mounted man listened, believed—and acted. Leaving Cassidy behind, he spurred his bay to a wallowing gallop, aiming for the northern confines of the park, and as he traveled, he spread the alarm, gathering up for the man-chase such recruits as two park laborers and a park woodchopper and an automobile party of young men, so that presently there was quite a good-sized search party abroad in the woodland.

As for Judson Green, he played his hand out alone. Dripping wet with rain and his own sweat, he emerged from a mile-long thicket upon an asphalted drive that wound interminably under the shouldering ledges of big gray rocks and among tall elms and oaks. Already he had lost his sense of direction, but he ran along the deserted road doggedly, pausing occasionally to peer among the tree trunks for a sight of his man. He thought, once, he heard a shot, but couldn't be sure, the sound seemed so muffled and so far away.

On a venture he left the road, taking to the woods again. He was working through a small green tangle when something caught at his right foot and he was spun about so that he faced the

opposite direction from the one in which he had been traveling, and went down upon his hands and knees, almost touching with his head a big licheny boulder, half buried in vines and grass. Glancing back, he saw what had twisted him off his course and thrown him down—it was an upward-aimed tree-root, stubby and pointed, which had thrust itself through his right shoe lacing. The low shoe had been pulled half-way off his foot, and, under the strain, the silken lace had broken short off.

In the act of raising himself upright, he had straightened to a half-crouch when, just beyond the big green-masked boulder, he saw that which held him petrified in his pose. There, in a huddle among the shrubs, where he would never have seen it except for the chance shifting-about of his gaze, was the body of a man lying face downward, the head hidden under the upturned skirts of the coat.

He went to it and turned it over. It was the body of the man he sought—Maxwell—and there was a revolver in Maxwell's right hand and a hole in Maxwell's right temple, and Maxwell was dead.

Judson Green stood up and waited for the other pursuers. He had won a hundred-dollar bet and Cassidy had lost a thousand-dollar reward.

THERE WILL BE ANOTHER OF IRVIN
COBB'S MASTERPIECES IN AN EARLY
ISSUE OF THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE



WHAT WILL

A Great Novel of New

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "Excuse Me," "The Old Nest," "The Gift Wife," "Miss 318," "Zal," etc

Complete Resumé of the First Installment

HERE is a story of New York written by a New Yorker as it has never been written before. In the first installment Mr. Hughes introduces his hero, Lieutenant Harvey Forbes, U.S.A., to that kind of metropolitan life that you might enter if some Ten Eyck, native Knickerbocker and man of wealth and position, would introduce you—into a small world of people who put on an armor of fine raiment and chase each new thrill as the savage hunted food, who care not so much what they do, but who consider it the unpardonable sin to be found out. Lieutenant Forbes sees New York women on parade, richly and wonderfully clad, and muses: "All these women are paid for by men. What do the women give in return? *What do they pay?*"

Forbes had thought wealth made weaklings. He comes straight and strong from fighting Moros in the Philippines. When he sees the women, beautified by luxury, lolling along Fifth Avenue in frail looking, satin finished automobiles, he feels that both have been made fragile by too much polishing. But the cars are all of steel, with high-power engines. And he finds the delicate women "built of steel too, and with splendid engines capable of velocities and distances that would leave gnarled peasants gasping."

Persis Cabot, young, beautiful, wealth-surrounded and sought after, teaches him this in his first day in New York. Forbes first sees her in her landaulet, while he is riding on top of a Fifth Avenue omnibus. He pursues but cannot even get a look at her face. All he carries away is a hazy recollection of the number of her car, "N. Y. 48150, 1913," and a mental picture of the question-mark feather in her hat. That night he sees her at a theatre (without knowing she is the woman he pursued on the Avenue) and feels her to be desirable over all things on earth. Murray Ten Eyck, a New Yorker whom Forbes befriended in Manila, is in her box party, and introduces Forbes. "Little Willie" Enslee, insignificant but a multi-millionaire, is the host, and Forbes hears Enslee's name linked with that of the beautiful Persis.

Ten Eyck notices Forbes' interest in Persis and warns him not to fall in love with her unless he is a millionaire. But the silken, slender Persis draws Forbes like a metal cable. When she insists on the party hunting a public place to turkey-trot after the theatre, he is horrified by the nature of the dance. But the women of the party—Mrs. Neff, a white haired, young-old widow; Winifred Mather, a substantial beauty; and Persis—all clamor to dance. And before the night is over Forbes learns the steps himself, and he and Persis Cabot hold each other in the close, welded grip of the tango, "almost one flesh—as if they were plighted lovers." This brings us to the second installment.

WILLIE ENSLEE brought the dancers off their pinions and back to earth by a fretful reminder that the bouillon was chilling in the cups and the crab-meat was scorching in the chafing-dish.

The question of drinks came up anew. Forbes was in a champagne humor; his soul seemed to be effervescent with little bubbles of joy. But Mrs. Neff wanted a Scotch highball. Winifred was taking a reduction cure in which alcohol was

PEOPLE SAY?

York Society Of To-day

Illustrated by
James Montgomery Flagg



forbidden. Persis wanted two more cocktails. Ten Eyck was on the water-wagon in penance for a recent outbreak. Bob Fielding was one of those occasional beings who combine with total abstinence a life of the highest conviviality. Off-hand, one would have said that Bob was an incessant drinker and a terrific smoker. As a matter of fact, he had never been able to endure the taste of liquor or tobacco. When he ordered mineral water, or even milk, nobody was surprised; even the waiter assumed that the big man had just sworn off once more.

Forbes experienced a sinking of the heart, as each of the guests named his choice, and nobody asked for any of the waiting champagne.

Yet, when Willie turned to him and said: "Mr. Ward, you have the two bottles of *brut* all to yourself," Forbes felt compelled to shake his head in declination. He never knew who got the champagne. He wondered if the waiter smuggled it out or juggled it on the accounts. And Willie forgot to ask Forbes what he would have instead. Willie ordered for himself that most innocent of beverages, which masquerades ginger ale and a section of lemon peel under the ferocious name, the bloodthirsty and Viking-like title of "a horse's neck." There was a lot of it in a very large glass, and Forbes noted how Willie's little hand looked like a child's as he clutched the beaker. And he guzzled it as a child mouths and mumbles a brim.

Forbes observed how variously people

imbibed. There were curious differences. Some shot their glasses to their lips, jerked back their heads, snapped their tongues like triggers and smote their throats as with a solid bullet. Some stuck their very snouts in their liquor like swine; others seemed hardly to know they were drinking as they flirted across the tops of their glasses.

Persis did not raise her eyes as she sipped her cocktail. She looked down and her lips seemed to find other lips there. Forbes wondered whose.

There was some rapid stoking of food against the next dance. When it irrupted, Forbes, greatly as he longed to dance again with Persis, invited Winifred, for decorum's sake. Winifred speedily killed the self-confidence he had gained from his first flight. His sense of rhythm was incommensurate with hers. When she foretold his next step, she foretold it wrong. He lost at once the power to act as leader; and when she usurped the post, he was no better as follower.

As Forbes wrestled with her, he caught glimpses of Persis dancing with Willie for a partner. Little Willie's head barely reached her bare shoulder. He clutched her desperately, as one who is doomed from babyhood not to be a dancer. Still he hopped ludicrously about, and almost succeeded in making even her ludicrous.

Forbes longed to exchange partners with Willie, for he felt that he and Winifred were equally grotesque. They were making the heaviest of going. He

gave up in despair and returned to the table.

When the music stopped, there was another interlude of supper. People gulped hastily as at a lunch counter, when the train is waiting. Forbes intended to sit out the next dance, but he found himself abandoned as on a desert island with Mrs. Neff.

"Come along, young man," she said.

"I'm afraid I don't know how."

"Then I'll teach you."

"But—"

"Don't be afraid of me. I've got a son as old as you, and I taught him."

Forbes had danced at times with elderly women, but not such a dance as this. It was uncanny to be holding in his arms the mother of a grown man, and to be whirling madly, dipping and toppling like wired puppets.

Mrs. Neff's spirit was still a girl's. Her body felt as young and lissome in his arms as a girl's. Her abandon and frivolity were of the seminary period. Now and then he had to glance down at the white hair of the hoyden to reassure himself. The music had the power of an incantation; it had bewitched her back to youth. It seemed to Forbes that this magic alone, which could return an old woman to girlhood for a time, could not be altogether accursed.

Perhaps the music had unsettled his reason, but in the logic of the moment, he felt that there was a splendid value in the new fashion, which broke down at the same time the barriers of caste and the walls of old age.

It was the Saturnalia come back. The aristocrats mingled as equals with the commoners, and the old became young again for yet a few hours.

He had read much about the cold, the haughty and the bored-to-death society of New York; yet here he was a young lieutenant from the frontier, and he was dancing a break-down with one of the most important matrons in America. And she was cutting up like a hired girl at a barn-dance. Plainly the nation was still a republic.

When the music ended with a jolt, Mrs. Neff clung dizzily to him, gave him an accolade of approval with her

fan, and booked him for the second dance. If Forbes had had social ambitions, he would have felt that he was a made man. Yet, if he had had social ambitions, he would probably have betrayed, and so defeated, them.

Mrs. Neff having granted him a reprieve of one dance, Forbes made haste to ask Persis for the next. She smiled and gave him that wren-like nod.

His heart beat with syncopation when he rose at the first note of music. How differently she nestled and fitted into his embrace. Winifred had been more than an armload, and gave the impression of an armor of silk and steel and strained elastics. Mrs. Neff was too slender for him, and despite her agility, there was a sense of bones and muscles. But Persis was flesh in all its magic. She was not bones or muscles or corsets; she was a mysterious embodiment of spirit and beauty, fluid yet shapely, unresisting yet real, gentle and terrible.

By now Forbes was familiar enough with the trickeries of the steps to leave his feet to their own devices—like a musician who knows his instrument and his art well enough to improvise: soul and fingers in such rapport that he could hardly know whether the mood compelled the fingers or the fingers suggested the mood.

And the same rapport existed with Persis. They evaded collisions with the other dancers and with the gilded columns by a sort of instinct; they sidled, whirled, dipped, pranced or pirouetted, composed strange contours of progress as if with one mind and one body.

And now the rapture of the dance was his and he was enabled to play upon her grace, and her miraculously pliant sympathy. Her brow was just at the level of his lips and he began to wish to press his lips there. Now and then her eyelids rose and she looked up into his downward gaze. They were mysterious looks she gave him. They were to her as impersonal and vague as the rapture that fills the eyes when the west is epic with sunset, or when an orchestra pours forth a chord of unusual ecstasy, or a rose is so beautiful that it inspires a kind of heavenly sorrow.

But Forbes misunderstood. He usurped to himself the tribute she was unconsciously paying to the mere beatitude of being alive and in rhythmic motion to music.

We have built up strange subtleties of perception. The most intolerable discords are those of tones that lie just next each other; the harshest of noises are when an instrument is just a little out of tune, or a voice sings just a trifle off the key.

Persis had accepted Forbes at Ten Eyck's rating as a gentleman to whom she could entrust her body to embrace and carry through the complex evolutions of a dance on a floor whose very throngs made a solitude and concealment for wantonness of thought and carriage.

So intimate a union is required when two people dance that it is easy to understand why the enemies of the dance denounce it as shameless carnality. It is hard to explain to them how potently custom and minute restraints permit an innocent dalliance with the materials of passion. One can only compare it to skating over thin ice, and say that so long as one keeps on skating, a tiny crust of chill permits a joyous exercise without a hint of the depths beneath. And the ice itself gives warning when the danger is too close; its tiny brittle sound is thunder in the ears.

This was Forbes' experience. A beautiful woman of exquisite breeding gave him a certain enfranchisement of her person. He could take her in his arms, and she him in hers. She would make herself one flesh with him; he could sway her this way and that, drag her forward or backward, co-exist with her breast to breast, thigh to thigh, and knee to knee. But he must not ever so slightly take advantage of her faith in him. He must not by the most delicate pressure or quirk of muscle imply anything beyond the nice conventions and romantic pretenses of the dance. Actresses make the same distinctions with stage kisses, and endure with pride before a thousand eyes what they would count a vile insult in the shadow of the wings or at a dressing-room door.

Forbes made the old mistake. Nothing venture, nothing gain, is a risky proverb. He ventured almost unconsciously, without any baseness of motive. Or, rather, he did not so much venture, as relaxed his chivalry. He breathed too deeply of her incense, paid her the tribute of an enamored thought, constrained her with an ardor that was infinitesimally more personal than the ardor of the dance.

Somehow she understood. Instantly she was a little frightened, a little resentful. As subtle as the pressure of his arm, was the resistance of her body. The spell of the dance was dissolving; the thin ice was crackling. He whispered hastily:

"Forgive me!"

She nodded and whispered:

"All right."

And the spirit of the temple of dance was rescued and restored. He had sung a trifle sharp, and she, like a perfect accompanist, had brought him back to the key.

But even as they whirled on and hopped and skipped in the silly frivolity of the turkey-trot, he was solemnly experiencing an awe of her. And now her beauty was less victorious over him than that swift pride which could rebuke so exquisitely, that good sportsmanship which could so instantly accept an apology.

When the music ended, he mumbled:

"Will you ever dance with me again?"

She abashed him with the true forgiveness that forgets, and spoke with all cheerfulness:

"Of course! Why not?"

The incident was closed in her heart. Its influence had just begun in his.

X

The turbulence of the dance increased as the more respectable people were sifted out. Hysteria is a kind of fretful fatigue, and the wearier these children of joy were, the more reckless they grew.

Willie Enslee first insinuated, then declared, that he had enough. He yawned frankly and abysmally. He

urged that it was high time they were all in bed. But the women begged always for yet another dance—"just one little 'nother," Winifred wheedled.

Ten Eyck whispered: "About this time Winifred always begins to talk baby-talk."

She was soon calling Forbes "the li'l snojer man." Whether the wine or the dance were the chief intoxicant, a tipsiness of mood prevailed everywhere. It affected individuals individually: this one was idiotically amused, that one idiotically tearful, a third wolfishly sullen, a fourth extraordinarily dignified, a fifth so audacious that her befuddled companions tried to restrain her.

The thin ice was breaking through in spots, and a few of the couples were floundering in black waters.

Others were merely childish in their wickedness. They tried to be vicious, and their very effort made them only naughty.

It all reminded Forbes of certain savage debauches he had witnessed. Only, the savages lacked the weapons of costume. It was curious—to a philosopher it was amusingly curious—to see how much excitement it gave some of these people to expose a shoulder or a shin more than one ordinarily did. The peculiar cult that has grown about the human leg since it has been wrapped up, is surely one of the quaintest phases of human inconsistency.

But intention is the main thing, and a circus woman in trapeze costume may suggest less erotic thought than a flirt who merely gathers her train about her closely. There was no mistaking the intention of some of these dancers. It was provocative, and, since it was public, it was hideous. Mobs left without rule or inspiring rulers always degenerate into excesses. The pendulum that swings too far one way is only gathering heavier and heavier impetus to the other extreme.

It happens whenever emotions are overstrained. At religious revivals and camp-meetings and crusades, no less than at revels, the aftermath is grossness. These people had danced too long. It was time to go home.

Forbes was finally compelled to agree with Willie. He began to wish very earnestly that Persis were not there. He would rather miss the sight of her, than see her watching such spectacles. He felt a deep yearning that she should be ignorant of the facets of life that were glittering here. This longing to keep another heart clean or to restore it to an earlier purity is the first blossom of real love.

The floor grew so boisterous that Forbes would no longer take Persis out upon it. He did not ask her to dance again. Even when she raised her eyebrows invitingly, he pretended not to understand.

Then she spoke frankly:

"Sha'n't we have another dance? They're playing the tune that made Robert E. Lee famous."

"I'm afraid I'm too tired," he pleaded. As soon as he had spoken, he felt that the pretext was insultingly inadequate, addressed to a woman, and coming from a soldier used to long hikes. But it was the only evasion he could imagine in his hurry. Instead of turning pale with anger, as he expected, she amazed him by her reply:

"That's very nice of you."

"Nice of me?" he echoed fatuously. "To be tired?"

"Umm-humm," she crooned.

"Why?"

"Oh, just because."

Then he understood that she had read his mind, and she became at once a sibyl of occult gifts. This ascription of extraordinary powers to ordinary people is another sign that affection is pushing common sense from its throne. Parents show it for their new-born; and what is loving but a sort of parentage by re-incarnation?

Forbes thought that he wore a mask of inscrutable calm, because he was accustomed to repressing his naturally impetuous nature. He had not realized that the most eloquent form of expression is repression. It is the secret of all great actors, and enables them to publish a volume of meaning in a glance or a catch in the voice, a quirk of the lips or a twiddling of the fingers.



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

Just outside the bank, Forbes stumbled upon Ten Eyck, who greeted him with a surprised: "Do you bank here?" "I was just opening an account," Forbes answered. "Pardon my not lifting my hat before," said Ten Eyck. "I didn't know your middle name was Croesus."

Forbes never dreamed that the gaucherie of his excuse showed the desperation of his mind, and the strain on his feelings; and that while his lips were mumbling it, his eyes were crying:

"Don't stay here any longer! You are tired. You do not belong here. I beg you to be careful of your soul and body. Both are precious. It makes a great difference to me what you see and do and are."

All this was writ so large on his whole mien that anybody might have read it. Even Winifred read it and exchanged a glance with Mrs. Neff, who read it too. Naturally Persis understood. The feeling surprised her in a stranger of so brief acquaintance. But she did not resent his presumption as she did Willie's equal anxiety. She rather liked Forbes for it.

Then she saw his consternation at her miraculous powers, and she liked him better yet for a strong and simple man whose chivalry was deeper than his gallantry. And when a man from another table came across to ask her to dance with him, she answered:

"Sorry, Jim, we're just off for home. Come along, Willie. Are you going to keep us here all night?"

Willie lost no time in huddling his flock away from the table. He fussed about them like a green collie pup.

They paused at the door for a backward look. Seen in review with sated eyes, it was a dismal spectacle. On the floor a few dancers were glued together in crass familiarity, making odious gestures of the whole body. At the disheveled tables, disheveled couples were engaged in dalliance more or less maudlin. Many of the women were adding their cigarette smoke to the haze settling over all like a gray miasma.

"Disgusting! Disgusting!" Willie sneered.

"Oh, the poor things!" sighed Mrs. Neff. "What other chance have they? At a small town dance they'd behave very carefully in the light, and stroll out into the moonlight between dances. Good Lord, I used to have my head hugged off after every waltz. I'd walk out to get a breath of air and have my

breath squeezed out of me. But these poor city couples—where can they spoon, except in a taxi going home? Or on a park bench with a boozy tramp on the same bench and a policeman playing chaperon? Let 'em alone."

But she yawned as she defended them, and looked suddenly an old woman tired out. They all looked tired.

They slipped weary arms into the wraps they had flung off with such eagerness. In the elevator they leaned heavily against the walls, and they crept into the limousine as if into a bed.

Forbes said that he would walk to his hotel. It was just across the street. They bade him good-night drearily and slammed the door.

He watched the car glide away, and realized that he was again alone. None of them had asked him to call, or mentioned a future meeting. Had he been tried and discarded?

XI

The sky was black and the stars dimmed by the street lights. Stars and street lights seemed to be weary. The electric acrobats had knocked off work and hung lifeless upon their frames like burned-out fireworks.

A newsboy munching a sausage sandwich by the little brasier of a white-clad "hot dog" merchant, murmured: "Mornin' poiper? *Joinal, Woil, Hurl, Times, Sun, Tolegraf?* Poiper, boss?"

Forbes bought one to enjoy the paradox of reading to-morrow's paper last night.

He entered the brightly lighted lobby of the hotel. It was deserted save by two or three scrubwomen, "tango-ing" about on all fours. They looked to be grandmothers. Perhaps their granddaughters were dancing across the way.

Once in his room, Forbes stared from his window across the slumbrous town. The very street lamps had the droning glimmer of night lights in a bedroom where a city slept. The few who were abroad had the appearance of prowlers, or watchmen, or hasteners home. New York was not so lively all night as he had been taught to believe.

While he peeled off his clothes, he glanced at his newspaper. The chief headlines were given, not to the epochal event of the first parliament in the new republic of China, or to the newest atrocity in the Amazonian insurrection in London, but to an open letter sent by the mayor of New York to the police commissioner of New York, calling upon him "to put an end to all these vulgar orgies" of the "vulgar, roystering and often openly immodest" persons who "indulge in lascivious dancing." The mayor announced that one o'clock in the morning was none too soon for reputable people to stop dancing. He instructed the commissioner to see to it that at that hour thereafter every dance-hall was empty, if he had to take the food and drinks from the very lips of the revelers and put them in the street.

Forbes was amazed. The great, the wicked city still had a Puritan conscience, a teacher to punish its naughtiness and send it to bed—and at an hour that many farmers and villagers would consider early for a dance to end. Forbes was startled to realize that he was included in the diatribe, and that those ferocious words were applied to Persis too. In all the things he had to wonder at, this was not the least wonderful. He stepped into his pajamas and spread himself between his sheets, too weary to reach forth a hand and turn out the little lamp by his bed.

He had slept no more than half an hour when suddenly he wakened. The last cry of a bugle seemed to be ringing in his ears. He sat up and looked at his watch. It was the hour when for so many years the cock-a-doodle-doo of the hated reveille had dragged him from his blankets. Habit had aroused him, but he thanked the Lord that now he could roll over and go back to sleep.

He rolled over, but he could not sleep. Daylight was throbbing across the sky like a long roll of drums. Street cars were hammering their rails. The early-morning population was opening the city gates, and the advance guards of the commercial armies were hurrying to their posts. The city, which he had seen at its dress parade and at its night

revels, was beginning its business day with snap and precision and with that superb zest and energy and efficiency that had made it what it was.

It was impossible for Forbes to lie abed where so much was going on. Fagged as he was, the air was electric and he had much to see.

He pried his heavy legs from the bed, and clenched his muscles in strenuous exercise while his tub filled with cold water. He came out of it renewed and exultant.

When he was dressed and in the hall, he surprised the chambermaids at their sweeping. They were running vacuum-cleaners like little lawn-mowers over the rugs.

In the breakfast-room he was quite alone. But the streets were alive, and the street cars crowded with the humbler thousands.

He walked to Fifth Avenue. It was sparsely peopled now, and even its shops were still closed. The homes were sound asleep, save for an occasional tousled servant yawning at an area, or gathering morning papers from the sill.

He walked to Central Park. The foliage here was wide awake and all alert with the morning wind. He strolled through the Zoo: the animals were up and about, the bison and deer, the fumbling polar bears. The lions and tigers were already pacing their eternal sentry-posts; the hyenas and wolves were peering about to escape; the quiz-zical little raccoons were bustling up and down.

He crossed bridges and followed winding paths that led him leagues from city-life, though the cliffs of the big hotels and apartment houses were visible wherever he turned. On one arch he paused to watch a cavalcade of pupils from a riding school. He was surprised to see them out so early. Other single riders came along the bridle-path, rising and falling from their park saddles in the park manner.

There were few women riding, and few of these rode sidewise. He was used to seeing women astride in the West; but here they did not wear divided skirts and sombreros; they wore smart

derby hats, long-tailed coats, riding trousers and puttees.

Coming toward him, he noted what he supposed to be an elderly man and his son. They were dressed almost exactly alike. As they approached, he saw that the son was a daughter. The breeze blew back the skirts of her coat, and as far as garb was concerned she was as much a man as the white-mustached cavalier alongside.

Forbes clutched the rail hard. The girl was Persis, different, yet the same. There was a quaintly attractive boyishness about her now, an unsuspected athleticism. Her hair was gathered under her hat; her throat was clasped by a white stock. Her cutaway coat was buttoned tightly over a manly bosom, and her waist was not waspish. Her legs were strong and gripped the horse well.

He could hardly believe that the lusciously beautiful siren he had seen with bare shoulders and bosom, and clinging skirts the night before, was this trimly buttoned-up youth in breeches and boots. Could an orchid and a hollyhock be one and the same?

He had felt sure that at this hour and on till noon, she would be stretched out in a stupor of slumber under a silken coverlet in a dark room.

The night had been almost ended when he had left her heavy-eyed with fatigue, yet the morning was hardly begun when he saw her here with face as bright and heart as brisk as if she had fallen asleep at sunset.

Her eyes were turned full upon him as she looked up before she passed under the bridge.

A salvo of greeting leaped into Forbes' eyes, and his hand went to his hat; but before he could lift it, she had lowered her eyes. She vanished from sight beneath him, without recognition.

He hurried to the other side of the bridge, to catch her glance when she turned her head. But she did not look. She was talking to the elderly man at her side. She was singing out heartily:

"Wake up, old boy! I'll beat you to the next policeman."

The old boy put spurs to his horse and they vanished at a gallop.

Forbes watched her till the trees at the turn in the bridle-path quenched her from his sight. The light went out of his sky with her.

She had not looked at him and had not remembered him! He would have known it if she had meant to snub him. He was merely one of the starers always gazing at her.

He had held her in his arms. But then so many men had held her in their arms when she danced! Even his daring had not impressed her memory. So many men must have pressed her too daringly. It was part of the routine of her life, to rebuff men who made advances to her.

Forbes left the bridge and left the park, humbled to a nausea. His cheeks were so scarlet that the conductor on the Seventh Avenue car stared at him. He could not bear to walk back to his hotel. When he reached there, he went to his room, dejected. There was nothing in the town to interest him. New York was as cold and heartless as report had made it.

He realized that he was very tired. He lay down on his bed. A mercy of sleep blotted out his woes. It seemed to be only a moment later; but it was high noon when his telephone woke him. He thought it an alarm clock, and sat up bewildered to find himself where he was and with all his clothes on.

From the telephone, when he reached it, came the voice of Ten Eyck.

"That you, Forbsey? Did I get you out of bed? Sorry! I have an invitation for you. You made a deuce of a hit with Miss Cabot last night. Even Little Willie is not disgusted with you. Winifred says she is thinking of marrying you herself, and Mrs. Neff says you can be her third husband if you will. Meanwhile, they want you to have tea with us somewhere, and more dancings. Wish I could ask you to take breakfast with me at the Club, but I was booked up before I met you. Save to-morrow for me though, eh? I'll call for you this afternoon about four, eh? Right-o! 'By!'"

Forbes wanted to ask a lot of questions about what Persis had said, but a

click showed that Ten Eyck had hung up his receiver. Forbes clung to the wall to keep the building from falling on him.

She had not forgotten him! She had been impressed by him! It was small wonder that she had not known him this morning. Had not he thought her a young man at first? Besides, she had had only a glance of him, and he was not dressed as she had seen him first.

The main thing was that she wanted to see him again, she wanted to dance with him again.

What a splendid city New York was! How hospitable, how ready to welcome the worthy stranger to her splendid privileges!

XII

As Forbes paid for his lonely luncheon in the restaurant of the hotel, the bill shocked him into a realization that he could not long afford such fodder as he had been buying for himself. He decided to get his savings deposited somewhere before they had slipped through his fingers.

On his way to New York he had asked advice on the important question of a bank, and had been recommended to an institution of fabulous strength. It did not pay interest on its deposits, but neither did it quiver when panics rocked the country and shook down other banks. Forbes chose safety for the hundred per cent rather than a risky interest of four. Especially as he had heard that Wall Street was in the depths of the blues and New York in a doldrums of uncertainty.

To Forbes, indeed, nearly everybody looked as if he had just got money from home and expected more, and the talk of hard times was ludicrous in view of these opulent mobs and these shop-windows like glimpses of Golconda. But perhaps this was but the last flare of a sunset before nightfall.

In any case, he was likely to have his funds tempted away from him and he must hasten to push them into a stronghold. He found at the bank that there was a minimum below which an account

was not welcome. His painful self-denials had enabled him just to clear that minimum with no more interval than a skillful hurdler leaves as he grazes the bar.

He felt poorer than ever for this reminder of his penury, and he almost slunk from the bank. Just outside he stumbled upon Ten Eyck, who greeted him with a surprised:

"Do you bank here?"

"I was just opening an account," Forbes answered.

"Pardon my not lifting my hat before," said Ten Eyck. "I didn't know your middle name was Croesus."

Forbes could only shrug his shoulders with deprecation. He had no desire to pose as a man of means, and yet he had too much pride to publish his mediocrity.

"I'll call for you at four, Mr. Rothschild," said Ten Eyck. "Got a date at Delmonico's here. Good-by!"

The afternoon promised to be unconscionably long in reaching four o'clock, and Forbes set out for another saunter down the Avenue. There was a mysterious change. It might have been that the sky had turned gray, or that the best people were not yet abroad, but the women were no longer so beautiful. He kept comparing them to one that he had learned to know since yesterday afternoon's pageant had dazzled him. Already there was a kind of fidelity to her in his unconscious disparagement of the rest of womankind.

He did not explain it so easily to himself, nor did he understand why the shop-windows had become so immediately interesting. Yesterday, a spadeful of diamonds dumped upon a velvet cloth was only a spadeful of diamonds to him. It stirred in him no more desire of possession than the Metropolitan Art Gallery or the subway. He would have been glad to own either, but the lack of possession gave him no concern.

This afternoon, however, he kept saying: "What would she think if I gave her that crown of rubies and emeralds? Does she like sapphires, I wonder? If only I had the right to take her in here and buy her a dozen of those hats! If



The young girl's flying hand smote Forbes on the nose. . . . She clung to Pers and



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLEMING

o Person and gasped: "Oh, Miss Cabot, is it you? I must have nearly killed you."

that astounding gown were hung upon her shoulders, instead of on that wax smirker, would it be worthy of her?"

He found himself standing in front of jewelers' windows and trying to read the prices on the little tags. He had already selected one ring as an engagement ring when he managed by much craning to make out the price. He fell back as if a fist had reached through the glass to smite him. If he could have drawn out his bank account twice, he could not have paid for it.

He gave up looking at diamonds and solaced himself by the thought that before he bankrupted the United States army buying her an engagement ring, he had better get her in love with him a little.

This train of thought impelled him to pause now before the windows of haberdashers. Without being at all a fop, he had a soldier's love of splendor and he saw nothing effeminate in the bolts of rainbow clippings which men were invited to use for shirts. He looked amorously at great squares of silk meant to be knotted into neckties of which all but a narrow inch or two would be concealed. And he saw socks that were as scandalously brilliant as spun turquoises or knitted opals.

These little splashes of color are all that the sober male of the present time permits himself to display. They were all the more enviable for that. From one window a hand seemed to reach out, not to smite, but to seize him by his overworked scarf and hail him within. He departed five dollars the poorer and one piece of silk the richer, and hurried back to his room ashamed of his vanity.

On his way thither he remembered that he was still an officer in the regular establishment, and the first thing he did on his return was to compose a formal report of his arrival in New York City. He sent it to the post at Governors' Island, so that in case a war broke out unexpectedly, an anxious nation would know where to find him.

The only war on the horizon, however, was the civil conflict inside his own heart. His patriotism was undergoing a severe wrench. He was expected

to maintain the dignity of the Government on a salary that a cabaret performer would count beneath contempt. And for this he was to give up his liberty, his independence, and his time. For this he was to teach nincompoops to raise a gun from the ground to their round shoulders and to keep from falling over their own feet; for this he was to plough through wildernesses, give himself to volleys of bullets or mosquitos to riddle, or worse yet, to live in the environs of a great city where beauty and wealth stirred a cauldron of joy from which he must keep aloof.

But that was for next week. For a few days more he was exempt; he was a free man. And she wanted to dance with him again! She would not even wait for night to fall. She would dance with him in the daylight—with tea as an excuse!

He began feverishly to robe himself for this festival. Luckily for him and his sort, men's fashions are a republic, and Forbes' well-shaped though last year's black morning coat, the pin his mother gave him years ago skewering the scarf he had just bought, his waistcoat with the little white edging, his heavily ironed striped trousers, and his last night's top hat freshly pressed, clothed him as smartly as the richest fop in town. It is different with women, but a male bookkeeper can dress nearly as well, if not so variously, as a plutocrat.

Forbes had devoted such passionate attention to the proper knotting of that square of silk, that he was hardly ready when the room-telephone announced that Mr. Ten Eyck was calling for Mr. Forbes.

But his pains had been so well spent that Ten Eyck, meeting him in the lobby, lifted his hat with mock servility again, and murmured:

"Oh, you millionaire! Will you deign to have a drink with a hick like me?"

Forbes pleasantly requested him not to be a fool, but there was an irresistible compliment in being told that he looked like what he vainly longed to be.

They went to the bar-room, where under the felicitous longitude of Maxfield Parrish's fresco of "King Cole"

they fortified themselves with gin rickeys and set forth for the short walk down Broadway and across to Bustanoby's.

They had been rejected here the night before, but Ten Eyck, at Persis' request, had engaged a table by telephone:

"It's Persis' own party," he explained, "but I have bad news for you: Little Willie isn't invited. He's being punished for being so naughty last night."

"He acted as if he owned Miss Cabot," said Forbes.

"He usually does."

"But he doesn't, does he? Doesn't own her, I mean?" Forbes demanded.

"Opinions differ. He'll probably get her some day, unless her old man has a change of luck."

"Her old man?"

"Yes. Papa Cabot has always lived up to every cent he could make or inherit; but he's getting mushy and losing his grip. The draught in Wall Street is too strong for him. Persis will hold on as long as she can, but Little Willie is waiting right under the peach tree with his basket, ready for the first high wind."

"She couldn't marry him!"

"Oh, couldn't she? And why not?"

"She can't love a—a—him?"

"He is an awful pill, but he's well coated. His father left him a pile of sugar a mile high, and his mother will leave him another."

"But what has that to do with love?"

"Who said anything about love? This is the era of the modern business woman."

Forbes said nothing, but looked a rebuke that led Ten Eyck to remind him:

"Remember, you promised not to marry her yourself. Of course, you may be a bloated coupon-cutter, but Willie has his cut by machinery. If you put anything less than a million in the bank to-day, you'd better not take Persis too seriously. Girls like Persis are jack-pots in a big game. If you haven't got a pair of millions for openers, you can't even get a look in."

"I don't believe you," Forbes thought, but he did not say it.

They reached the restaurant and finding that Persis had not arrived, stood on the sidewalk waiting for her. Many people were coming up in taxicabs, or private cars, or on foot. They were all in a hurry to be dancing.

"It's a healthier sport than sitting round watching somebody else play baseball—or Ibsen," Ten Eyck observed, and then he exclaimed:

"Here she is!" as a landaulet with the top lowered sped down the street. The traffic rules compelled it to go beyond and come up with the curb on its right. As it passed, Forbes caught a glimpse of three hats. One of them was a man's derby; one of them had a sheaf of gaura; and one of them was a straw flower-pot with a white feather like a question mark stuck in it. His heart buzzed with reminiscent anxiety. He turned quickly and noted the number of the car, "N. Y. 48150, 1913." The woman he had followed up the Avenue was one of those two.

The chauffeur turned sharply, stopped, backed and brought the car around with the awkwardness of an alligator. A footman opened the door to Bob Fielding, Winifred Mather and Persis Cabot.

Persis was the answer to the query-plume. Forbes saw a kind of mystic significance in it.

Winifred, as she put out her hand to him, turned to Persis:

"You didn't tell me our li'l snojer man was coming."

"I wasn't sure we could get him," said Persis, and gave Forbes her hand, her smile and a cordial word: "So nice of you to come."

He seized her hand to wring it with ardor, but its pressure was so lax that he refrained. His eyes, however, were so fervid that she looked away. For lack of support his hopes dropped like a flying machine that meets a "hole in the air."

XIII

She was talking the most indifferent nothings as they went through the hall to the dancing-room, a largish space

with an encircling gallery. As usual, the dancing-floor was a clearing in a thicket of tables. It was swarming already with couples.

The costumes were duller than at night, of course. Most of the men wore business suits: the women were not *décolletées* and they kept on their hats.

Only, Forbes noted at once that the crowd included many very young girls and mere lads. Here, too, there was a jumbled mixture of plebeian and aristocrat and all the grades between. There were girls who seemed to have been wanton in their cradles, and girls who were aureoled with an innocence that made their wildest hilarity a mere scamper of wholesome spirits.

An eccentricity of this restaurant was a searchlight stationed in the balcony. The operator swept the floor with the fierce white rays, occasionally fastening on one pair of professional dancers and following it through the maze, whimsically changing the colors of the light to red or green or blue.

When Forbes arrived, a couple whirled madly off the dancing floor straight into the midst of Persis' guests, with the havoc of a strike in a game of nine-pins.

The young man's heel ground one of the buttons of Forbes' shoe deep into his instep, and the young girl's flying hand smote him in the nose. He needed all his self-control to repress a yowl of pain and dismay. Persis must have suffered equal battery, but she quietly straightened out the dizzy girl and smiled:

"Come right in, Alice: don't stop to knock."

The girl under whose feet the floor still eddied clung to Persis and stared at her a second, then gasped:

"Oh, Miss Cabot, is it you? I must have nearly *killed* you. Can you *ever* forgive me?"

Persis patted her hand and turned her around to Forbes: "You'd better ask Mr. Forbes. You gave him a lovely black eye."

The girl acknowledged the introduction with a duck and a prayer of wild appeal:

"Oh, Mr. Forbes, *what* a ghastly, *ghastly* shame! Did I really hurt you? I must have simply *murdered* you. I'm so ashamed. Can you ever, *ever* forgive me?"

Forbes smiled at her melodramatic agitation: "It's nothing at all, Miss—Miss—I never liked this nose anyway. I only wish you had hit it harder, Miss—"

"Miss Neff," Persis prompted. "You met her mother last night."

Forbes vaguely remembered that some poet had said something about a beautiful mother of a more beautiful daughter, but before he could frame it into a speech Persis startled the girl beyond the reach of a pretty phrase, by casually asking:

"Were you expecting to meet your mother here this afternoon, Alice?"

"Good Lord, I should say *not*! Why?"

"I just wondered. She is to meet us here."

"When? In heaven's *name*! When?"

"She ought to be here now."

Alice thrust backward a palsied hand and clutching the young man she had danced with, dragged him forward. He was shaking hands with Ten Eyck and brought him along:

"Stowe! Stowe!" Alice exclaimed with a tragic fire that did not greatly alarm the young man, who apparently was used to little else from her.

"Yes, dear," he answered with a lofty sweetness.

"Oh, honey, what *do* you suppose?"

"What, dear?"

"That awful mother of mine is expected *here* any *moment*!"

The young man's majesty collapsed like an overblown balloon in one pop: "Lord!"

Tableau! Ten Eyck, seeing it, muttered gloatingly: "Some folks gits ketched."

Alice turned eyes of reproach upon him:

"She'll *kill* us if she finds us together. Isn't there some other way out?"

"I could go down the stairs the waiters come up," said Stowe. "But how will you get home?"

"Oh, Mother will get *me* home all right, never fear!" said Alice. "Run for your *life*, honey. I'll have my maid call you on the 'phone later."

The young man gave her one long, sad look fairly reeking with desperate kisses and embraces. Then he vanished into the crowd.

Then Alice turned to Persis, and clutched her arm as if she were about to implore some unheard of mercy:

"And, oh Miss Cabot, will you do me one *terribly* great favor. I'll remember it to my *dying* day, if you *only* will."

"Of course, my dear," Persis answered with her usual serenity. "What is it? Do you want me to tell your mother that I met you somewhere and dragged you here against your will to meet her?"

Alice's wide eyes widened to the danger point:

"Aren't you simply *wonderful*! How on earth could you possibly have *ever* guessed it?"

Persis cast a sidelong glance at Forbes; it had all the effect of a wink without being so violent.

"I'm a mind-reader," she said.

Alice caught the glance but not the irony of it, and exclaimed:

"*Indeed* she is, Mr. Forbes. She really *is*."

"I know she is," said Forbes with a quiet conviction that was almost more noisy than the violent emphasis of Alice.

Persis gave Forbes another sidelong glance, this time with a meek wonderment in place of irony. Once more the man had shown a kind of awe of her. Unwittingly, he was attacking her on her most defenceless wall; for a woman who is always hearing praise of her beauty or her vivacity, so hungers and thirsts after some recognition of her intellectual existence that she is usually quite helpless before a tribute to it.

Persis knew that there was no importance in her guess at what Alice was about to ask, but there was importance in the high rating Forbes gave it. The comfort she found in this homage was put to flight by Alice's nails nipping her arm.

"Before Mother comes we must re-

hearse what we're to say. She thinks I went to one of those lectures on Current Topics. They're so *very improving* that Mother can't bear to go herself. She sends *me*, and then forgets to ask me what it was all about. So I sneaked it to-day and met Stowe."

"Why don't you receive Mr. Webb at home?" asked Persis.

"Oh, why don't I indeed! Mother won't allow him within a *mile* of the place. Didn't you know that?"

"Oh, but you are quaint, Alice," Persis laughed. "I thought it only happened in books and plays, but here you are Alice actually obeying a cruel order like that. I thought your mother always liked Mr. Webb."

"Oh, she did, till his father's will was probated. His insurance was immense, but his debts were immenser. So poor Stowe is dumped upon the world with hardly a cent. Of course I love him all the more, but Mother has turned against him. I wouldn't mind starving with Stowe, but Mother is *so* materialistic! She wants to marry me off to that dreadful old Senator Tait."

"Dreadful?" snorted Winifred, who had listened in silence. "Old! Senator Tait is neither dreadful nor old. He is a cavalier and in the prime of his powers."

"You can have him!" snapped Alice with a flare of temper that she regretted instantly, and the more sincerely since she knew that Winifred had long been angling vainly and desperately for the Senator. There was a more bitter sarcasm in her retort than she meant, but Winifred knew what Alice was thinking and canceled it by meeting it frankly:

"I wish I could have him. God knows I'd prefer him to any of these half-baked whippersnappers that—"

"Winifred!" Persis murmured subduingly, and Miss Mather subsided like a retreating thunderstorm: "The Senator is one of the—"

"I know he is, my dear," Alice broke in in her most soothing tone. "He's *far* too splendid a man for a fool like me. But can't I admit how splendid he would be in the Senate Chamber without wanting him in my boudoir?"



Just in time the music came to an end, and the *danse macabre* was done. But the floor still wheeled beneath and put it to her wan mouth. Ten Eyck shoved a chair against Forbes' relaxing



JAMES MONTEGOMERY FLACE

Forbes' feet and he staggered. He supported Persis to a table and guided her to a seat. He caught up a glass
knees, and set a tall glass in his hands, saying: "Gad, old man, you need a drink."

"Alice!" gasped Persis. "Remember that there are young men present."

Forbes spoke very solemnly: "Pardon my asking, but do you really mean that Senator Tait is—is proposing for your hand?"

"So my awful mother says."

"It doesn't sound like the Senator Tait I used to know."

"You knew him well?" Persis asked with a quick eagerness that did not conceal a note of surprise. Forbes caught it and answered somewhat icily: "I had that privilege. He was often a guest at our house. He and my father used to ride to the hounds together. In fact, they were together when my father's horse threw him and fell on him and crushed him to death. Senator Tait brought the body home to my poor mother. He was very dear to us all."

Persis looked what sympathy she could, for such remote suffering. And Forbes was something less of a stranger. Also he had moved one step closer to her degree.

He had appeared first under the auspices of Murray Ten Eyck, who guaranteed him as an officer in the army. He had demonstrated his own dignity and magnetism. And now his family was sponsored by an old-time friendship with Senator Tait, a very Warwick of American royalty.

XIV

Persis was not of the period, or the set that thinks much of family. In fact, the whole world and its aristocracies have been shaken by too many earthquakes of late to leave walls standing high enough to keep youth from overlooking and overstepping them. Few speak of caste nowadays, except novelists, editors, and the very old. What aristocracies we have are clubs or cliques gathered by a community of tastes, and recruited individually.

In any case, the Persis that was willing to go out into the byways and highways and public dancing places would have made no bones of granting her smiles and her hospitality to anybody that entertained her, mountebank or

munner, tradesman or riding master.

And yet it certainly did not harm Forbes in her eyes to have him established as of high lineage and important acquaintance. If only now he were rich, he would be graduated quite into the inner circle of those who were eligible to serious consideration.

Unconsciously Ten Eyck gave him this diploma also, though his motive was rather one of rebuke to Persis for her little tang of surprise.

"You needn't raise your brows, Persis, because Forbesy knows Senators and things," he said. "He's a plutocrat, too; I caught him depositing a million dollars in one of our best little banks today."

"A million dollars!" Forbes gasped. "Is there that much in the world?"

Forbes had no desire to palm himself off as a man of wealth, and yet he could not delicately discuss his exact poverty. He could not bring himself to confess, "I have only my small army pay and a few hundred dollars in the bank," because he felt that nobody here was interested in his financial status. Yet even the pretense by silence troubled him. His problem was dismissed by an interruption.

"Is anybody at home?"

Mrs. Neff spoke into the group as if she had materialized from nothing. Nobody had noticed her approach, and everyone was startled. To Forbes her sharp voice came as a rescue. Mrs. Neff did not pause to be greeted or questioned, but went at her discourse with a flying start:

"I'm mad and I'm hungry as the devil—oh, pardon me! I didn't see my angel child. Alice, darling, how on earth did you get here? Murray, if you have a human heart in your buzzum get the waiter man to run for a sandwich and a—a—no, I'll be darned if I'll take tea; in spite of example to youngers, who never follow our good examples, anyway—make it a highball, Murray; Scotch and quick!"

The waiter nodded in response to Ten Eyck's nod and vanished with an excellent imitation of great speed.

"Give over, Win'," Mrs. Neff con-

tinued, prodding Miss Mather aside and wedging forward with the chair Ten Eyck surrendered to her. "What's in those sandwiches?—lettuce?—thanks! Don't all ask me at once where I've been! I'm the little lady what seen her dooty and done it. If my angel child had done hers she would be even now listening to a lecture on Current Topics so that she could inform her awful mother, as she calls me, what the tariff talk is all about, and who Salonica is, and why the Vulgarians are fighting the Balkans. But of course, being a modern child, she plays hookey and goes to *thés dansants* while her mother works."

"But Mother dear, I was just—"

"Don't tell it, my child! I know what you're going to say. You're going to tell me that Persis picked you up and dragged you here by the hair. And Persis will back you up, of course, like the dear little liar she is. But I'll save you the trouble, darlings. Where is he? Is he still here or did he learn of my approach and flit?"

"He—who?" said everyone zealously.

"He—who?" Mrs. Neff mocked. "He-haw! Oh, but you're such rotten actors you ought to join the Comedy Club. So he has been here. Well, I mention no names, but if a certain young person whose initials are Stowe Webb wants to meet a little old lady named Trouble, let him come out from under the table."

"Mother dear, how you do run on!" Alice protested. "I don't think you really need another highball."

"Another! Listen to that! Dutiful child trying to save erring mother from drunkard's grave! And me choking with thirst since luncheon! Do you know where I've been? Yes? Then I will tell you. I've been at a committee meeting of the Working Girls' Vacation Savings Fund."

The band struck up and she sipped her highball hastily as she talked:

"That's the most insulting music I ever heard, and I'm just mad enough to dance well. If nobody has any prior claim on this young soldier man, he's mine. Mr. Forbes, would you mind supporting your grandmother around the room once or twice?"

Forbes had counted on dancing first with Persis. He had regretted even the dance that was wasted while Alice poured out her woes. To have to spend the next dance on her mother was a grievous loss, but he made a good face of it, bowed low and smiled, "Nothing would give me more pleasure."

Mrs. Neff answered his bow with an old-time courtesy and beamed. "Very prettily said! Old-fashioned and nice. My first husband would have answered like that. Did Murray tell you that I had offered you the job of being my third husband?"

"Mother!" Alice gasped.

Forbes was exquisitely ill at ease. It is hard to parry banter of that sort from a woman. He bowed again and answered with an ambiguous smile:

"Nothing would give me more pleasure."

"Fine! Then we may as well announce our engagement. Kind friends, permit me to introduce my next husband, Mr.—Mr.—, what is your first name, darling?"

"Mother!" Alice implored.

"Oh, I'm sure his first name can't be Mother. But we're missing the dance. Come along, hero mine!"

Forbes cast a look of longing at Persis, who was regarding him with an amused bewilderment. A moment later she herself was in the bear-like hug of Bob Fielding. But as she was twirled past Forbes now and again, her eyes would meet his.

He was thinking so earnestly of her that he was almost surprised at some indefinitely later period to find that Mrs. Neff was in his arms, and that they had been always footing it intricately through a restless maze. He realized also that he had not spoken to her yet. He cast about in his mind for a topic of conversation, as one whips a dark trout-pool, but brought up nothing. So he danced a little harder and swept her off her feet till she was gasping:

"Stop, stop! I'm afraid I'm only an old woman after all. And I didn't want you to know."

He led her to a chair, where she sank exhausted and panting hard. By the time

the dance was over and the rest had returned, she was herself again:

"My new husband is the love of a tangoist," she babbled across her high-ball. "If that infernal committee meeting hadn't kept me so late, I could have had more. Are you all going to the Tuesday Trot to-night?"

They all were.

"I was to have taken Alice, but I'm going to put her to bed without any supper. I'll take Mr. Forbes instead. Will you come? Nothing would give you more pleasure. That's right. Sorry I can't accept your invitation to dinner, but I'm booked. What about the opera to-night? It's 'Tristan and Isolde' with Fremstad. Senator Tait was to have taken us, but he can't go; so Alice went care to go. He sent me his tickets, and I have all those empty chairs to fill. Mr. Forbes can fill one. You can, can't you?" He nodded helplessly and she hunted him a ticket out of a handbag as ridiculously crowded as a boy's first pocket. "It begins at a quarter to eight. I can't possibly be there before nine. You go when you want to. Who else can come?"

Persis said that she was dining at Winifred's with Willie, and added: "He hates the opera, but if I can drag him along I'll come. And if I can't, I'll come anyway."

Winifred accepted for Bob: "I always think I ought to have been a grand opera singer," she sighed; "I've got the build for it."

Ten Eyck "had a dinner-job on," but promised to drop in when he could.

Having completed her quorum, and distributed her tickets, Mrs. Neff made ready to depart by attacking her high-ball again. The music began before she had finished it, and Forbes rose before Persis with an old-time formula:

"May I have the honor?"

As Persis rose with a nod, Winifred cried:

"Traitor! It's my turn with the li'l snojer man."

And Mrs. Neff caught Persis' elbow to say:

"Be very circumspect, or I'll sue you for alienation of the alimony."

Forbes and Persis smiled back mockingly.

Forbes extended his empty arms and she filled them. She was his again in the brief mock-marriage of the dance. His very muscles welcomed her with such exultance that he must forcibly restrain them from too ardent a clasp. He was afraid to trust himself to silence. It gave imagination too loose a rein. To keep himself from loving her too well, and offending her again after she had forgiven him once, he had recourse to language, the old concealer of thought.

Forbes astonished Persis and himself by his first words:

"Don't you ever sleep, Miss Cabot?"

She threw him a startled glance: "Do I look so jaded as all that?"

He was so upset that he lost step and regained it with awkwardness of foot and word: "No, no, it's be-because you look—you look as if you slept for—forever. I don't mean that exact—exactly, either."

"Then what do you mean, Mr. Forbes?"

"I mean I left you this morning at about four o'clock in one costume, and I saw you at eight in another."

"At eight this morning? Oh, yes, I was riding with my father. Were you riding too? I didn't see you."

"Oh, yes, you did. I stood on the bridge at daybreak. And you looked at me and cut me dead."

"Did I really? I must have been asleep."

"Far from it. Your eyes were as bright as—as—"

"This music is very reassuring, isn't it?"

"Yes, please blame the music if I grow too rash. But you really were wonderful. I thought you were a boy at first, and you ride so well! You were racing your father. How could you be so wide-awake after so strenuous a night?"

"Oh, I had to get up. It is poor Dad's only chance to ride nowadays. He's awfully busy in the Street, and he's so worried. And he needs the exercise. He won't take it unless I go along."

There was an interlude of tenderness in the music. He responded to it:

"That's very beautiful and self-sacrificing of you. But how can you keep up the pace?"

"I can't, much longer. I'm almost all in. But the season is nearly over. If everything goes right, Dad and I will get out of town—to the other side, perhaps. Then I can sleep all the way across. If he can't go abroad, we'll be alone anyway, since everybody else leaves town. Then I can catch up on sleep."

"You must be made of iron," he said.

"Am I so stiff as all that?"

"Oh, no, no, you are—you are—" But he could not say anything without saying too much. She saved the day by a change of subject:

"And I stared right at you, and didn't know you!"

"Why should you? It was stupid of me to expect you to remember me. But I did, and—when you didn't, I was crushed."

"Of course you were," she crooned. "I always want to murder anybody who forgets me."

"Surely that can't happen often? How could anyone forget you?"

It was perfectly sincere, yet it sounded like the bumptious praise of a yokel. She raised her eyelids and reproved him: "That's pretty coarse work for a West Pointer. Rub it out and do it over again."

Again he lost the rhythm and suffered agonies of confusion in recovering it. But the tango music put him on his feet again. It was impossible to be humble to that uppish, vainglorious tune, that treader pomposity.

Persis herself was like a pouter pigeon strutting and preening her high breast. All the dancers on the floor were proclaiming their grandeur, playing the peacock.

Forbes grew consequential too, as he and Persis marched haughtily forward shoulder to shoulder and outer hands clasped, then paused for a kick, whirled on their heels and retraced their steps with the high knee-action of thoroughbreds winning a blue ribbon.

Then each hopped awhile on one foot, the other foot kicking at the partner's shins. Then they dipped almost to the floor. As he swept her back to her full height, the music turned sly and sarcastic. It gave a color to his words that he did not mean:

"Will you pardon me one question?"

"Probably not. What is it?"

"Didn't you wear this same hat yesterday?"

Her head came up with a glare. "Isn't that a rather catty remark for a man to make?"

"Oh, I didn't mean it that way," he faltered. "It's a beautiful hat."

"No hat is beautiful enough to be worn two days in succession. It's unkind of you, though, to notice it."

"For heaven's sake, don't take it that way. I—I followed this hat of yours for miles and miles yesterday."

"You followed this hat!"

"Yes."

The operator had thrown in a red screen, and now wherever they moved they were in a rose-hued atmosphere. It tinted their thoughts and warmed them.

They danced, marched, counter-marched, pirouetted, in a pink-mist. And he told her in his courtly way with his Southern fervor how he had been captivated by the white plume, and the shoulder and arm, and the foot: how vainly he had tried to overtake her for at least a fleeting survey. He told her how keen his dismay was when she escaped him and fled north. He told her how he made a note of the number of her car. He did not tell her that he forgot it, and he did not dare to tell her that he was jealous of the unknown to whom she hastened.

Persis could not help but be pleased, though she tried to disguise her delight by saying:

"It must have been a shock to you when you saw what was really under this hat."

She had not meant to fish so outrageously for a compliment. She understood, too late, that her words gave him not only an excuse but a compulsion to praise. Praise was not withheld.

"If you could only know how I—how

you—how beautiful you—how—I wish you'd let me say it!"

"You've said it," she murmured. His very confusion revealed an ardor too profound to be rebuked or resisted. She luxuriated in it and rather sighed than smiled:

"I'm glad you like me."

It was a more girlish speech than she usually made. Unwittingly she crept a trifle closer to him, and breathed so deeply that he felt her bosom swell against him with a strangely gentle power. By immeasurably subtle degrees the barrier between them dissolved, or rather shifted until it surrounded them. They were no longer strangers. They were together within a magic enclosure.

He understood the new communion, and an impulse swept him to crush her against him. He fought it so hard that his arm quivered. She felt the battle in his muscles, and rejoiced in the duel of his two selves, both hers. She knew that she had both a lover and a guardian in his heart.

She looked up to see what manner of man this was who had won so close to her soul in so brief a time. He looked down to see who she really was. Their eyes met and held, longer than ever before, met studiously and hospitably, like the eyes of two lonesome children that have become neighbors.

What she saw in his gaze gave a little added crimson to her cheeks. And then the music flared up with a fierce ecstasy that penetrated even their aloofness. He caught her close and spun with her in a frenzied rapture round and round. He shunted other dancers aside and did not know it. He was glared at, rebuked, and did not know it. The impetus of the whirl compelled a tighter, tighter clutch. Their hands gripped faster. He forgot everything in the mystic pursuit and surrender of the dance; the union and disunion of their bodies; her little feet companioning his, the satin and steel of her tense sinews, the tender duality of her breast against the rock of his, the flutter of her quick, warm

breath on his throat, the sorcery of her half-averted eyes tempting his lips unbearably.

The light burned about them like a flaming rose. The other couples had paused and retreated, staring at them; but they did not heed their isolation. They swooped and careened and twirled till they were blurred like a spinning top.

At length he found that she was breathless, pale, squandered. She hung all her weight on his arm, and grew so heavy that it ached.

And now, when he looked down at her, he saw that the operator had inadvertently put upon them the green light. In Forbes' eyes it had a sickly, cadaverous glimmer as of death and dissolution. He did not know that she was about to swoon, but she was so gray and lifeless that he was frightened. In the green, clammy radiance she looked as if she had been buried and brought back to daylight. She was horribly beautiful.

Just in time the music came to an abrupt end, and the *danse macabre* was done. But the floor still wheeled beneath his feet and he staggered as he held her limp and swaying body.

She shook the dizziness from her eyes, and put away his arm, but seized it again. He supported her to the table and guided her to a seat. Then he caught up a glass and put it to her wan mouth.

Ten Eyck, who had been watching them from his place, shoved a chair against Forbes' relaxing knees, and set a tall glass in his hand, saying:

"Gad, old man, you need a drink!"

Forbes took a gulp of a highball and sat staring at Persis. Ten Eyck was quietly dipping his fingers into his own glass and flicking water on Persis' face. She regained her self-control wonderingly. Her lips tried pluckily to smile, though her eyes stared at Forbes with a kind of terrified anger—but more at herself than at him. He met them with a gaze of adoration and dread.

As his hot brow cooled, it seemed that an icy hand passed across it.

The next installment of "What Will People Say?" will be printed in the October Red Book Magazine, on the news stands September 23.

When Hall Was Young

By Frederick R. Bechdolt

Author of "Lighthouse Tom," "Jimmy Riley's Turn," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY DOUGLAS DUER

FREDERICK R. BECHDOLT'S tales are the conch shells of storydom—they bring the salt sea smell, the flap of sails by night and the wild rover daring of "before-the-mast" days, in addition to the shells' roar and coral-tinted beauty. Here is one of his best. It will take you among the seal-enriched isles of Behring Sea in times before every other craft was a government policeman and when the fight for the silky pelts was to the strongest. There is a big man-to-man fight in the story. "No goug'in', no bitin' or kickin'," was the simple rule that governed it, and the prize was a bunch of as fine a lot of skins as bull seals or queens of fashion ever wore.

IT was early evening in the Harbor Police Station. The Game-well ticker was tapping off in brisk succession the hourly reports from all the beats. It told that trouble slumbered now, along the city front. Box-number followed box-number, a long series of rat-tatting "All's well's."

Here in the sacred wire-screened enclosure behind the desk-sergeant's counter, three big men in blue and brass were talking idly of such things as came to mind. MacKenzie, the desk sergeant, stood with his broad back to the blotter whereon he listed the names of those who fell into the clutches of the law. He was burly in his old age, thick-chested, square of jaw. His voice rumbled like a drum. Sam, the wagonman, a blond young giant whose knuckles were scarred from holding the Black Maria's rear door in many a wild jailward ride, leaned forward, now listening to old MacKenzie, now drawing him on. And Kelly, on station detail, rapped the hissing radiator with his night-stick, hearkening to the two.

Idly they gossiped: of the broken peace, of tragedies recent, of tragedies long gone, of mysteries hidden by the bay which lapped the piles a stone's throw away, of politics, of murder and of theft.

The street door opened. All three men stiffened and fell silent before a tall, straight figure in the buttonless blue of a department official. The man's hair was white; his face had a rigid dignity as he nodded to them. He passed through the room, sweeping them all with one glance from his keen gray eyes.

"Anything stirring?" He asked the question with the briskness of a martinet.

"Nothing, Captain," answered MacKenzie.

Captain Hall went on and entered his own office. He closed the door behind him, leaving Sam brushing away some tell-tale cigar ashes from his coat. The grizzled desk sergeant saw the movement and smiled.

Sam grinned uncomfortably. "I got ten days last year when he found me out in the alley taking a drag at a cigarette,"

he explained. Then, in a growl: "All accordin' to the rules wit' *him*. He was raised on printed laws, I'll bet! Good captain, all right; but he never knew what it was to raise a little hell himself. He'd be better for havin' tore loose once or twice."

MacKenzie chuckled. He was gazing at the ceiling, and he seemed to find something there which made Sam's remarks amusing. The wagon-man looked sharply at him. "Why do ye laugh?" he demanded.

"I was just thinkin', Sammy," said MacKenzie, and his tone was indulgent, "what ye said of bein' raised on laws and never tearin' loose. Well! Well!"

"Well, what?" Sam looked at him curiously. "If ye can show me the contrary—"

The desk sergeant glanced toward the closed door; then he drew a chair close to the wagon-man and beckoned Kelly to sit near.

"You lads," he said quietly, as if he feared being overheard beyond the partition, "think Captain Hall was raised on rules! Now if ye'd seen what I've seen—"

"So?" Kelly interrupted eagerly. "Was he ever disrated, mebbe?"

"Lord love ye!" MacKenzie shook his head. "There never was a stricter officer. What I'm talkin' of was before either him or me was on the force. Years ago, when we was shipmates together. Raised on printed laws, ye say! Sammy, I've seen Bill Hall break the laws of nations and run his chances—wit' the pen at MacNeils Island on the one side and the bottom of Behring Sea on the other. Aye! More than once! More than once! And I've been with him too. I'll tell ye of one time that'll show ye what he used to be."

"Go ahead, Sergeant,"—Sam's voice was pleading,—"tell ut to us before I get a wagon call."

The burly old desk sergeant cleared his throat uneasily, and glanced again at Captain Hall's closed door. "Mind, both of ye," he warned, "don't spill ut. I'm tellin' ye what he would bear again me if he ever heard ut."

"Years ago, when you two was kids

and mindin' your school teachers, me and Bill Hall was wit' the sealin' fleet. Hunters, both of us. Number one liners, as the sayin' went."

"And what," asked Sam, "was that?"

"Top-notchers," said MacKenzie. "Hunters that the skippers was glad to have because they could get the skins when other hunters could not. That was us. And, let me tell ye, that meant takin' your big chances under the horizon in a dory when the weather was thick and the sea a-runnin' high. Bill Hall's hair was dead black then; and he stood straight and tall like he does now—a fine man to look at; and he was afraid of nothing that walked."

"Now this thing that I am tellin' ye about happened when we was wit' a schooner called the *Alice*. We'd been four months out from the Golden Gate, and no luck to speak of. Then one afternoon we found ourselves in a harbor we had never seen before, a-lookin' at a town we'd never heard of."

"'Twas the village of Nushigak on the bay of the same name—an arm of Bristol Bay. Nowadays the salmon canneries are pretty thick in them parts. But this was years ago; and the place was wild—the town was like the old Rooshians had left it, a fur tradin' station and that was all it was known for. We'd never've seen it, only we'd been driven off our course and we needed fresh water."

"There was a river mouth, and thick forests of black spruces all about, wit' mountains som'ers behind, and the little bunch of native cabins hanging clost to a company store. And there was a saloon."

"That was what got us—this here saloon. It seems like one of the big companies was doing some work or other a few miles back in the interior. I do not know what it was; but they had a bunch of men. And that was the reason for the saloon. But we knew nothing of the reasons; and we run onto it unexpected."

"There was three of us ashore, me and Hall and a little red-headed man by the name of Finney, hunters all of us. We'd been four months to sea, and consequently our tongues was hangin' out

for a drink when we got sight of the bar. And there was not a cent amongst us, of course.

"We stood outside the door and looked in. There was no street, ye mind: jest a company trading store and this saloon facing the beach, and the Siwash cabins all bunched around. And us three seal hunters a-standing there wit' the bay behind us and the thick forests all around the place. It was like Columbus discoverin' America or Balboa seeing the Pacific Ocean—the way we looked at it.

"Well, we talked about the wonder of it, and Bill Hall was the first of us to get down to cases. Says he: 'The idee is, we do not care how it come here; but we want to get a drink. And now stow this talk, and let's see wot's chances.'

"Wit' that he started in and us two followed him. The place was half dark, and the bar was facin' the door. When we got inside we made out a man behind that bar, a big man all shaggy wit' a lot of hair and a beard, and he had the longest nose I ever see on a man's face. He stood there, sayin' nothin' at all, but glowering at us three as we come in a-lickin' our lips.

"'Afternoon, mate,' says Hall.

"The big man wit' the long nose grunted something or other.

"'Wot's chances for us three gettin' a drink?' says Hall, pleasant enough.

"'Four bits apiece,' the Long Nosed

Man croaked like a parrot.

"Hall laughed. 'Mate,' says he, 'outside the cabin there aint four bits aboard the ship.'

"We was comin' on up to the bar. The Long Nosed Man says nothin' now, but he reached down somers and he fetched out a huge club and he laid it on the bar in front of him.

"'Hootch,' says he, 'costs four bits a drink here.' Then he says nothin' more, but he sort of hefted the big club wit' one hand.

"Hall was gettin' mad; I could see it, the way the blood was comin' into his face. 'Looks like ye was sort of fond of that there club,' says he. 'Wot do ye keep ut fer?'

"'For bums,' says the Long Nosed Man. And Hall sucked in his wind between his teeth.

"Just then the two mates come into the door behind us and sung out to us to come aboard ship; the schooner was about to sail.

"Hall did not even look around at them. 'Bums,' says he. 'Meanin'

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"'Ye got me,' the Long Nosed Man answered back; 'no Frisco dock rats can sponge drinks off of me.'

"The first mate got both hands onto Hall's shoulders then, and stopped him. 'If ye don't come on board the ship now,' says he, 'I'll report ye to the skipper and ye'll be logged.'



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He fetched out a huge club and he laid it on the bar in front of him.

"'Ye heard what that long-nosed lubber said to me?' Hall asked the mate. But all the satisfaction he got was, 'Come on.'

"And me and Finney, not bein' hot under the collar yet, told him to come along. But he tried to break away, and us two had to grab him to hold him in.

"As we was leavin' the place, the Long Nosed Man sang out, 'When ye've got the price, come back.' And that made Hall start fighting the three of us. But we got him down to the boat and on board the schooner. And that afternoon we sailed away.

"Hall was terrible sore. He seemed to take them words to heart more than his not havin' got a drink. And he held it up again' me and Finney, because we had not let him sail into the Long Nosed Man for misnaming him. He told ut that night in the steerage where the hunters bunked. We had a pretty good amidships crew, so fer as gettin' skins went, but they was peaceable compared to most of them that I've sailed wit': a Kanaka or two, a pair of Gayhead Indians and the rest from San Francisco. They laughed at him abusing us two.

"'A sweet pair,' Hall says to us. 'If I was wit' Aleck MacLane and his old bunch, there would not be two logs of that saloon on top of each other this night. Ye are good shipmates, I do not think!'

"Well, we tuk it quiet enough; for both of us knowed Hall and his ways, and we liked him mighty well. And all hands turned in after a while. But the next day Hall was still a-growlin' about ut. And so the day after that.

"We sailed into the south and west. We browsed around, but we got no seals. And all the time Hall kept beefing over what the Long Nosed Man had said. 'Bums,' he would growl, and then: 'Frisco dock rats.' I could see that the Long Nosed Man was layin' heavy on his mind.

"So it went for about two weeks; and then we made a dash for the rookeries.

"International law was takin' care of the Pribiloffs in them days. But wot

figger do the laws of nations cut when there is only one revenue cutter in Behring? And just then the cutter was chasing a Lime Juicer schooner from James' Bay. So we slipped up one afternoon and the fog was crawling over the sea. And we laid to wit' St. George's Island off the weather bow. We could hear the bull seals a-bellerin' from our decks.

"Now we was not the only ones that was figgering on a raid. When the fog and dark was dropping down, we got sight of a Jap schooner a matter of two miles away. We'd sighted her before, on the other side of the pass; and we knew she had had good luck wit' the herd.

"'Bulgin' wit' skins under her hatches already,' says Hall to me as we was standing by the rail. 'And now she aims to steal from Uncle Sam.' He stood there a-lookin' at her until the fog and murk had hid her; and then he drew hard on his pipe. After a minute or two he turned on me sudden. 'Where's Finney?' he asks.

"'Somers below,' I told him.

"'Go and call him up,' says Hall. 'You two are the only men on this ship wit' any gameness. Bring him here, I tell ye, MacKenzie.'

"And I seen that he was excited.

"So I went and got Finney on deck and the three of us stood by the rail; and Hall whispered to us in the thick of the fog. It was then that he give us the lay of the plans, Sammy—him that ye said was raised by rules and never broke loose."

The desk sergeant chuckled:

"Listen," he said, "and I'll tell ye what we done."

He glanced over his shoulder at the door to the captain's office. It was still closed.

"He had a hard time talkin' us into ut, did Hall. He had a way wit' him and I was young meself in them days; and I'd 've followed him to hell in an open boat, I do believe; and so would Finney. But, Lord love ye! This was goin' too strong! I told him as much; but what with him havin' ragged the two of us about not takin' his part in that saloon, and what wit' his sayin' he'd try ut alone rather than leave the chance

go, we said we would stay with him.

"So we laid out our plans all careful; and we started in that night. Ye understand what our schooner was after. A raid on the rookeries is quiet work and swift. Ye have to land your boats and get the skins before the guards that the company has hear ye. That is not all, either. The revenue cutter is liable to come up any minute; and when ye have got the skins, ye must hustle back to the schooner, load them under the hatches and get out of Behring Sea as fast as sail can take ye. Lord help ye if ye dont! 'Tis the pen and confiscation.

"So our skipper got the boats overside when dark come. The fog and dark was thick. We worked as quiet as men could. And while we was at it we heard the rattle of a block and the noise of oars comin' through the dark. We knew the Jap was gettin' busy too, at the same project.

"Hall laughed. 'Wot did I tell ye?' says he to me and Finney. For that was what us three was lookin' for.

"Well, the dories went overside. Us three was in the same one—and no one else. We dropped behind the rest. They went on for the land.

"Then we changed our course and we rowed towards the Jap schooner. We slipped off into the night all by ourselves



Then some one kicked out the lantern and we was all of us fightin' in the dark like a bunch of tom cats.

—accordin' to Hall's crazy scheme.

"The tide was wit' us; there was a bit of air stirrin', and the fog had a sort of coldness in it that chawed into your bones. We rowed on as quiet as we could. The Jap was showin' no lights, but we got sight of the flare of a match where some one was lightin' himself a smoke. Then we lifted the oars and drifted. We come slippin' right down on her.

"We made no sound at all. We drifted half the length of her; and Hall got a turn of the painter makin' us fast before we heard any disturbance. Then some one started walkin' towards the rail.

"We had it all made up between us; so there was no words spoke. Finney boosted Hall, and then I give Finney a leg up. And as I was doin' ut, I heard the tromp of boots and a string of Japanese talk. I got Finney up, and the boots come poundin' back again, several pair, and there was a light on deck.

"I stood there in the dory wit' the swell a-fallin' away and waitin' fer it to rise again. When it did, I reached up and I got Finney's hands an my wrists. As he was draggin' me up and on board, I heard Hall's fist land on the first Jap.

"I got over the rail and onto my feet in time to see two of them a-sailin' right into me. Then some one kicked out the lantern and we was all of us fightin' in the dark like a bunch of tomcats.

"I do not much know wot the others done. I was too busy myself. Ye know, Sammy—fer ye have handled them in the wagon—how a Jap can fight when he wants to. And these sailors wanted to. Some one clouted me over the top of the head wit' a belayin' pin and the blood was all over me; and I had one Jap in my arms a-tryin' to holt him free of me. I felt his fingers a-scratchin' over my neck. I'd heard of them there foul holds they call *jiu jitsu*, and I knew that it was now or never. I lifted his feet clear of the deck and swept him over my shoulder; then I hove him as far as I was able. He made a lot of noise hittin' the deck; and I turned in time to catch his pardner a-comin' for me wit' the belayin' pin. This time I got it acrost my fist; 'tis that crack give me this." Old MacKenzie held up his right hand and displayed two deeply sunken knuckles. "But I caught him fair in the jaw wit' the left and he was out of it.

"I looked about me to see wot was doin' wit' the others. 'Get a bit o' line, somebody,' says Hall; and, 'Here ye be,' says Finney. Them two had been livelier than me, or they had had better luck. We had four Japs dead to the world on the deck, and the other had made a run fer ut and hid somers below. We triced these up; and we made fer the main hatch.

"Well, there was skins enough there to satisfy any man. Hall dove down and he hove up the bundles; and Finney and me tuk them to the rail and dropped them into the dory, until we had enough.

"'Now, lads,' says Hall, and he come on deck again. We piled overside and we cast loose. I don't think we had been on board of her more than fifteen or twenty minutes altogether; but we had made an almighty racket and it was high time to be gettin' open water between us and the schooner. So we turned to the oars and we got off into the fog.

"When we'd got a half a mile away, Hall begun laughing. 'It looks,' says he, 'like we was goin' to show wit' the price o' the drink. I wonder is that Long Nosed Man game himself?'

"'Time enough to think o' that when we get there,' says I. 'Bristol Bay's more'n a hundred miles away.'

"'A hundred miles away,' says Hall. 'And there'll be more'n one pair of glasses combin' down the open sea fer us too. But, lads, wait till I see that Long Nosed Man again!'

"Wit' that there come the sound of a shot, faint-like, far astern. The three of us knew what that was—the revenue cutter had got back. And so we crowded on the oars and hoped the chase would not come our way. We had a compass and Hall give us our course, pretty nigh due east. We held her there, and the wind begun to rise. The fog lifted and the stars showed overhead.

"By morning it was blowin' a light gale; the dory was laden heavy, wit' the skins and the three of us. We went before the wind into the east; and there was not half an hour all of that day and the next night when one of us was not bailin'. But we could see no sign of a sail anywheres. We had that part of Behring to ourselves.

"The wind rose some that next night and we had to lighten her; we hove some of our grub overboard. Hall would not lose a single skin.

"'I'll take chances on drownin' first,' he says.

"Well, the storm held on; and it was cruel cold. But the air was crowdin' us from aft, and that was some comfort,



There was not half an hour when one of us was not balin'.

though we was wet and half frozen, and nigh dead for sleep.

"To make a long story short, we tore over the big seas, and we baled her as we went along; and at last the wind died down again, and the swells was not so choppy. So in the end we got a chance to sleep—one man at a time. And this was the way fer six long days and nights. The luck of fools was with us, and on the morning of the seventh day we sailed up Nushigak Bay.

"And now," says Hall, "we'll see this Long Nosed Man that called us bums."

"He was laughing when he said it, although his eyes was red and his face was all dug deep wit' wrinkles from what he had went through. I had been sore at him during them weary days and nights for what he had towed us into; but when I stood there on the beach beside him and seen him grin, I had to hand it to him; he was made of iron.

"Well, the three of us walked up to that little saloon. There was the Long Nosed Man, behind the bar, as shaggy as ever, in the light of the lamp. He said no word, but he hauled out that big club. He knew us all right!

"Hall laughed. 'Evenin', mate,' says he. 'We're back again.'

"The Long Nosed Man grunted and played wit' the club. 'We brought the price this time,' says Hall. The Long Nosed Man let go of the club.

"Show me the price," says he, "and ye get the hootch." But his voice was more pleasant now.

"All in the right time," Hall give him answer. "There is things to be settled between me and you. We come quite a little ways fer that. Ye called me a bum. D'ye mind that word?"

"The Long Nosed Man picked up his club again and hefted it; and Hall laughed once more. 'Put it down,' says he. 'If it was rough work we'd come for, us three would 've pulled this place of yourn to pieces by now. I aim to make a bargain wit' ye. Can ye fight?'

"Well, I will say this fer that there Long Nosed Man: he was no piker after all. Says he, slow enough:

"I can hammer yer head down between yer two shoulders, if it comes to

that. But if ye three try roughin' me, I'll use the club.'

"So," says Hall. 'Never mind the club. It's me and you. This is fair and above-board wit' me. Bide here and we'll be back. Come on, lads.'

"So the three of us went down to the dory and we come back again wit' the skins. We flung the bundles on the floor; and when we had done, there was a thousand dollars a-layin' there, as prices went in them days.

"The Long Nosed Man had come out from behind the bar now; and he had left the club. He was staring down at the pile.

"Where did they come from?" says he.

"Never mind that there," says Hall. 'Ye do not care. There is lots of salt water between here and there. Ye know wot they are worth.'

"I aint buyin' skins," says the Long Nosed Man.

"Nobody asked ye to," says Hall. 'But ye can fight fer them. If ye do not, I'll knock your block off anyhow. Ye called me a bum. I'll show ye the kind of a bum I am. Here is a thousand dollars worth of skins. If you get the best of ut, us three will leave yer joint, as dry as we come in, and ye have them pelts. And if I get the best of ut, we drink our fill this night—as much as we want. Now are ye as game as ye talk?'

"The Long Nosed Man, he said nothin' fer a minute; and then, 'Who is to name the winner?' says he.

"Why," says Hall, 'the loser, o' course. When ye get enough ye can tell me.'

"The Long Nosed Man looked at me and Finney and then he scowled.

"Well," says he, 'that's fair. Peel!'

"He throwed off his coat and rolled up his sleeves. Now Hall had his coat and shirt on the floor and was kickin' them off to one side. I stood by the door and Finney beside me.

"Rules?" says the Long Nosed Man, spitting on his hands.

"No gougin', bitin' or kickin'," says Hall. 'That suits me.'

"It suits me," says the Long Nosed Man. 'Come on!'



"Them two was hugging each other like a pair of Kadiak bears."

"And then they went to ut.

"Sammy, ye think because ye are big and husky that ye can fight; and ye think ye have seen fightin'. Lord love ye, lad! Ye should 've been there that night and seen Bill Hall mix ut wit' the Long Nosed Man.

"First they clinched; and then they went to the boards together. There was a little tin alarm clock a-tickin' away on the bar. I watched it, and them two big burles was thirty-two minutes on the floor! It is true.

"Some way they pried each other loose and they got up together. Both of them was a-breathing mighty hard. They crouched and come closter to each other. Foot to foot they stood and swapped clouts. Man! Ye could hear their big fists go—Clip! Clip!

"Then the Long Nosed Man caught Hall one good one under the ear; and Hall sailed through the air, and hit the bar wit' a bang.

"'Good-by, skins!' says I to meself. But, 'Look!' says Finney.

"And Hall was gettin' up already. He was not any too quick either; he got his pins in under him just in time to catch the Long Nosed Man's knuckles on his teeth.

"In another second, them two was hugging each other like a pair of Kadiak bears. I seen Hall trip the Long Nosed Man and go down on top of him.

"That lasted a good three minutes; and it was the starting of the end. For the manner in which Hall hammered that fellow was hard to look at. But some way or another he got too interested in ut, and the Long Nosed Man made out to squirm about, so that Hall had his ch'ice of lettin' him up or going under himself. They got on their feet together and they began trading punches again.

"And now the Long Nosed Man was gettin' three for every one he handed out, and he was beginnin' to shake in the knees. But he did eat it up! Man! Ye would 've said that punishment was meat and drink to him. At last his hands got heavy and he could not lift them up. Hall caught him one good one on the

chin. The Long Nosed Man went down and out.

"Hall come over to me and Finney, breathin' very hard, and bloody from his eyes to his chin. Says Finney:

"'We may as well take a drink while he's comin' to.'

"Says Hall, 'He aint said "enough" yet.'

"We waited for a little while. The Long Nosed Man began to make funny little noises; and at last he tried to sit up. He couldn't make it. He laid back on the floor and he looked at Hall. He tried to say something; but he had to give it up. A minute or two later he managed to lift his head and he p'inted to the whiskey bottles behind the bar.

"He was a good sport all right, down under his hide, that Long Nosed Man. The first drink poured out that night was give to him by Hall. And that drink was needed, too.

"The Long Nosed Man was too much all in to do any more than lay there watchin' us for an hour or so. After he did make himself one of us, things begun to move very fast. Well! Well! I was younger then—and a bit wild!

"It was long after day when I went to the door to get a breath of air; and the first thing I clapped eyes on was the schooner *Alice*, a-layin' there in the bay. It turned out afterward that the cutter had chased the Jap, and our ship had slipped away. And here she was now. Well, the skipper was glad to see us. It is a fact. Ye understand, we give him the skins—and he had not any too many hunters anyhow."

MacKenzie paused and smiled upon the other two. Into the silence came a sound. It was the opening of the Captain's door.

Captain Hall came out from his office. He passed through the room, erect, keen-eyed. Instinctively the three big men in blue and brass stiffened before his gaze. Their bearing was like a salute. And as he went by, MacKenzie arose quickly, fumbling for some reports. And Sam, the wagon-man, glanced uneasily at his coat, as if he feared some of those cigar ashes might still be there.

ALMOST SIXTEEN

By Ida M. Evans

Author of "Virginia," "The Proof of Love," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. A. WILSON

EIGHT months ago, the name of Ida M. Evans was practically unknown in the magazine world. Then the RED BOOK "discovered" her, saw the tremendous appeal in her stories—they are refreshingly accurate "blue-prints of life"—and began featuring them. To-day the demand for her work is far greater than she can meet. She is a star of the first magnitude. You will understand why when you read this very human story.

IN the Kanzer millinery factory, Nita was not of much importance—as Nita unconcernedly knew. Merely one of the great, ever-increasing class of young, round-hipped, eager-eyed girls whom the economic conditions of the twentieth century have tossed into the dusty, crowded road of toil, and said: "Scratch, chickens, if you want to eat."

"Sassier than most," the forewoman said surlily, with an offended glance at Nita's big, black eyes, vermilioned cheeks, and sleazy purple cotton messaline dress—which was as near a reproduction of the clinging mauve *crêpe de mètre* worn by Madame Krayne of the French trimming room as Nita could contrive with two dollars and twenty cents and her own none too clever fingers.

In the bald head of James Kanzer, who owned the wholesale house of which the factory was an adjunct, Nita was categorized with the brown paper boxes stacked at the rear of the shipping-room: trivial cogs of the millinery business.

"One of the kind that's born 'bad,'"

snapped Cora Ashley, who sat near the head of the first table. Nita, forgetting that Cora was waiting impatiently for pink thread, had stopped in the shipping-room, which adjoined the stock-room, and spent seven gay minutes in persiflage with Anton.

"It's such as she that makes factory girls looked down on," said Cora irately when the seven minutes threatened to stretch into ten. Cora was thirty-two years old and had pale gray eyes.

When the air of an August day is a low, hot, humid blanket, and a hundred machines whirr at your tired ears, rangling words drop like cinders from an over-filled ash-can.

Sauntering up with the pink spool balanced on a slim forefinger, Nita heard. She shrugged her shoulders, grimaced behind Cora's tidy brown hair, tossed her little black head till her forty-eight-cent pearl ear-rings jingled, and flipped the thread with ostensible aim at Cora's outstretched hand.

Nita's aim was either poor, or—very good. She grinned amiably when Cora, spluttering in wrath, had to delve under the long table after the spool.

"Get me some black taffeta linings—*quick*, Nita!" commanded Josephine, who sat next Cora. Josephine's black-and-white-striped ratiné was imitated almost as extensively as Madame Krayne's *crêpe de météore*, and had cost more. Josephine's cheeks out-rouged Nita's. But her oval, brown eyes, instead of being young and impudent, were *blasé*, insolent, and pooled in fine, betraying lines.

Nita started off briskly. She liked Josephine. On the way she happened to glance casually at the clock hanging on the drab wall overhead. Nine minutes to six! Gracious! Nita swerved from the aisle leading to the stock-room, scurried to the lavatory, there to rub a grimy chamois skin over cheeks, chin and the neck that rose like a soft, white column from the low-cut purple sleaziness.

Six meant home and supper. Home and supper were merely preambles to the corner and Harry.

Her unhurried return five minutes later met the tail of a vocal cyclone from the strained throat of a perspiring and wearied forewoman. "Ne-e-eta! —That girl acts like this place was a rest-room! Saturday night she's laid off, or I'll know the reason why! Ne-e-eta Eckers! You get those linings for Josephine *this minute*! If I report you to old Kanzer—"

Nita's impertinent amiability fluttered not at all. Threats and railings of a forewoman were like the thunderous roar of the elevated trains seven stories below: continual, nerve-frazzling, ear-wearying, but nothing to arouse alarm. In two years of waiting upon tables, Nita had acquired an insouciance of spirit against which railings and threats pattered with the inefficacy of pebbles against an aluminum breastplate.

She was complacently aware that forewomen loathe, above all earthly tasks, the breaking-in of a new table-girl at rush-time. Nita knew that at the end of the busy season she would be laid off. Not a day sooner, unless she vaulted over all known precedent of loafing and impertinence. Under the fluffy black hair lay a canny knowledge of vaulting limits.

So, standing on one foot, the other poised ready for fleet departure, Nita watched the long hand of the clock poke over the last interminable minutes.

"Nita!" shrilled Josephine reproachfully. "This hat ought to go out to-night—"

"First thing to-morrow morning I'll get those linings, Josephine," vowed Nita, both ears attuned for the signal that work should cease.

In the Kanzer millinery factory, closing time is not announced by gong or bell or clock. Instead, silence falls—with a thud. The electric power is shut off; the noisy wheels of the machines revolve once or twice, raspingly, then are quiet. After the long clamor of the day, the sudden quiet is strange—almost death-like. New girls, whose unaccustomed nerves have trembled and cringed ten hours under the whirr of those machines, jump nearly in panic at the terrifying cessation. Old girls, whose nerves have long since grown taut, lean back with an involuntary sigh of relief, and for a moment fold their hands in unconscious copy of the last eternal folding.

Nita's sharp little ears caught the first, hardly perceptible lessening of the whirr. Instantly, she flung her black sateen apron, already untied, to the nearest table; ahead of all others she scooted to the coat room. On the way, a quick upward movement of tongue-wet thumb and forefinger metamorphosed the two black wisps of hair dangling in front of her ears into two fluffy sprays.

When Nita's hat was adjusted, those fluffy sprays peeped coquettishly around the yellow edge. It was a gaudy purple and yellow inverted bowl, that hat. Nita had painstakingly modeled it after the mauve and gold boat worn by Madame Krayne earlier in the season. However, mauve velvet at four dollars a yard has a subdued brilliancy that thirty-eight cents finds hard to equal. And yellow straw at nineteen cents a bolt does not glitter with the correct elegance of imported cloth-of-gold.

"Looks like a jumbled bunch of circus poster," criticised Cora, who wore a neat navy-blue chip. Cora could understand

—partially—a yearning for mauve and cloth-of-gold. The inferiority of soul that flaunted purple and yellow in lieu received her unbounded scorn.

Nita cared nothing for Cora's opinion. She plumped the offending gaudiness over her low, fluffy black coils, pulled it down—down—jerked it, perked it, till it covered all but the two outstanding sprays, till it went over crayola-ed eyebrows, over gay, impudent black eyes, almost over her small nose and pink cheeks, and left practically nothing for the observer but a white-powdered chin.

As the purple and yellow bowl sailed toward the freight elevator reserved for employees, Anton grabbed his hat from a locker, and streaked after. A step behind him hurried Carl, a tall boy with flat shoulders and a sallow young face that burned red whenever the head shipping clerk roared at him.

The small white-powdered chin tilted scorn at both. Not for them did the black fire smoulder in Nita's joyous eyes, or the soft smile anticipatorily quirk the corners of her red lips.

Anton and Carl were relics of her immaturity. Long, long ago—oh, at least seven months ago—when she was just past fifteen, she had enjoyingly accompanied Carl to divers nickel shows, and with gratitude crunched his offerings of crackerjack and peanut brittle. Now, Nita smiled in self-derision at herself. The idea! Why, the boy was only seventeen!

Anton, who was twenty-one, had supplanted Carl. Every pay-day for several months Anton had carefully divided his wages in two parts. One contained what his widowed mother required, and enough for laundry and carfare. The other, consisting of two dollars and seventy-five cents, was blissfully devoted to maple-and-nut sundaes, ginger ale, rides on the Whirling Glide and Royal Leap, iced lemonade, and other treats for Nita.

Six weeks before, in Joyland Park, Anton had unwarily introduced Harry Graham, a casual acquaintance. Harry was twenty-five. His short-clipped blond hair had a crisp wave. The crease of his natty trousers was saber-straight. The ties of his patent-leather oxfords were

the essence of nobbiness. The green-maroon-and-lilac ribbon of his jauntily-worn straw hat was a riot of harmony.

Since then, Anton's square, unlively face and serious gray eyes had been no more alluring to fickle Nita than the oil-cloth covered tables of the factory. Oh, Anton was a good-enough fellow. She didn't dislike him. Nothing nifty about him, though. *Gauche*, Nita would have classified him had a vocabulary limited by the fifth grade held the word. Lacking it, she giggled to Josephine, going down in the elevator: "I don't want to hurt his feelings—but who could see a stewed prune when a grapefruit was around?"

Amusement glinted in the *blasé* depths of Josephine's oval brown eyes.

"Nita," she asked curiously, "who was the blond exhibit of haberdashery that you had in tow at Brell's dance hall last Saturday night?"

The happy little smile quirking the corners of Nita's mouth spread proudly.

"Harry Graham. Aint he handsome?"

"Um-m-m," said Josephine with a noncommittal inflection. "Those shoulders and purple-violet eyes would certainly embroider a canoe in any summer-resort advertisement. Where does he get the money to pay for that Atlantic-City wardrobe that he sports?"

"He works on the Board of Trade," —proudly.

"O-o-oh! How'd you find all that out?"

"He told me so."

"O-oh!"

Josephine looked down curiously at the eager, prideful face smiling from under the purple and yellow bowl. Something that was not amusement glinted in her eyes. Their *blasé* depths softened. She turned sideways, so that Cora could not hear, and murmured: "Take my advice, kid. Can that silk-socked doll."

"Wha-at!"

Indignant wonder replaced the prideful smile. As plier of the swiftest and most artistic needle at the first table, Josephine was entitled to respect. As possessor of a wardrobe that rivaled Madame Krayne's in smart cut and high

cost, Josephine drew homage as a pan of cornmeal draws chickens. It seemed, however, that Josephine was growing old and crabbed.

"The idea!" pouted Nita hotly. "Why, he's the nicest—"

"Certainly," Josephine cut in drily. "But, considering their lovely violet hue, your friend Harry's eyes are mighty fish-like. And that is a bad combination, chicken. Once I knew a fellow with fishy violet eyes—"

The elevator was at the main floor. The door clanged open. Nita, unheeding, scurried out and street-ward. With home and the corner two miles away, scurrying is imperative if one would be scrubbed, manicured, coiffed, re-complexioned and arrayed in pink linene by eight o'clock.

There are street cars, of course, for the use of hurried people. But when your mother has to have all but one of the four dollars that you receive weekly, and that single silver disk must cover gowns, hats, shoes, gloves, rouge and near-silk hose, a nickel is not disbursed lightly. Besides, the last week's dollar was spent.

II

A factory, dusty, whirring, overlooking a sluggish, humidity breeding river, vitiates energy. Add the two-miles' walk—in August—and only blood effervescent with youth and expectation can still pulse gaily.

End the walk with a kitchen whose foreground is crowded with a sizzling stove, a red-clothed table, a sprawling baby, a tired woman, two or three scuffling children, and a blackish wooden sink. Put in a background of age-and-dirt-grayed walls and ceiling, and a floor of ancient murkiness.

Invest the whole with the odor of liver frying on the stove, garlic from the flat above, boiled cabbage from across the way, the tin-twang of a street-piano in the alley below, the wail of a sickly baby from somewhere around, the shrill screeching of the dozen families whose kitchen windows look on the same courtway, the rattle and clatter of street cars and wagons, and you no longer

wonder why people have ceased to cower in cushioned pews at the mention of brimstone.

Nita, breathless from the scamper up three flights of stairs, felt a thrill of repulsion as she advanced through a living-and-bed-room into the oppressive air of the kitchen-and-dining-room. Analysis of the cause and effect existing between mural tints and mental states was beyond Nita's ken. She ascribed the thrill wholly to the heat, and thought with longing of the tables near the bandstand in Joyland Park.

"Tired, Nita?" her mother asked, lifting slices of liver to a plate.

"—And hot,"—throwing her hat to a chair, and pushing the perspiration-dampened wisps up from her face. She picked up the sprawling baby sister whose black eyes were replicas of her own, planted a kiss halfway between its banana-smeared cheek and tousled hair, dropped it to the floor, and hurried to the sink, there to rub straw-dyed fingers vigorously against a bar of pumice soap.

Presently, as Nita entered upon the complete laving of face and neck that heralded an evening out, her mother asked: "Where are you going to-night, Nita?"

"Got a date with Harry,"—briefly.

Her mother opened her lips to speak—then closed them on a sigh. She was a stooped woman with the shapeless form of one who has borne many children in rapid succession, and the anxious eyes of one who has wondered at each birth how another small mouth can possibly be filled. Enveloping her was the depressive air of habitual calculation that long poverty imparts, the calculation that must be continually including cent and half-cent.

A boy and a girl, long-legged, came tearing upstairs. The children scuffling on the floor scrambled to the table. Nita pulled a towel from a nail over the sink, and dried face and hands, frowning hard over one jagged finger-nail that in spite of pumice soap recalcitrantly exhibited an under ledge of verdigris. Then she smiled amiably at the family circle.

Her mother ignored the smile. "Nita,



"To-morrow," said her mother, "I'm going to tell your father that you're out every night till twelve o'clock."

this is the third night running that you've gone out," she accused crossly.

Nita had pulled a chair between the baby and her oldest brother, who jabbed for a piece of liver with the gusto of hungry fourteen.

The accusation drew wide-eyed reproach from her.

"My goodness, Ma, there's no fun just staying home!"

"But you're gadding every night—and folks on the street are saying—"

"What do I care for folks on the street?"—contemptuously. "I aint doing any harm,"—plaintively. "All the girls at the factory go to dances and parks."

"I wish that you'd bring this Harry up so that I could take a look at him—"

"Bring Harry up here?" Nita laughed—not joyously. She shot a glance toward the other two rooms which with the kitchen formed the Ecker's flat. Once, before Nita was born, the carpet of the living-room had boasted color and nap. Years and many feet had worn both away. It was as smooth and dingy as asphalt. As for the chairs—Nita laughed again.

That unpleasant laugh hackled a temper already fretted by anxiety. "You'll quit this gadding," Nita's mother announced harshly.

Sullenly Nita pushed her plate back. She was never hungry on warm evenings. "I guess when I work all day, I've got a right to have a little pleasure nights!" she retorted.

A thread of pathos twined through the sullen note. Wrath died from the older woman's faded eyes. "But, Nita," she pleaded, "not every night—"

"Ma," Nita interrupted, changing the subject, "can't I keep out an extra quarter next week? Walking every day is awful hard on shoes." She stuck out the warped toe of a small slipper. "See?"

"I see. But it's rent week,"—wearily. "And I owe at the grocery store. Anyway," with sudden reversion to wrath, "those shoes are plenty good enough for the factory. And that's the only place you need to go for a week. If your father didn't work nights, you'd not—"

Satisfaction glimmered demurely under Nita's lowered lashes. Quite often,

arriving home at midnight or later, undressing to the accompaniment of her mother's upbraidings, Nita had blessed the fate that made her father a night watchman in a glue factory.

With the insouciance acquired in table-waiting, Nita stood no more in fear of her tired, railing mother than of the sprawling baby. There had been a flurry of argument when Carl with his nickel-show invitations had marked Nita's first sidle toward larger life. After the flurry, her mother had capitulated, had even, with an unexpected tolerance of the longings of fifteen, voluntarily increased Nita's first allowance of fifty cents to one dollar.

At Anton's introduction, and Nita's consequent greater incursions into the domain of personal freedom, the arguments had been more heated, capitulation more lingering. Nita had been compelled to remind her mother very huffily that nearly-sixteen has sense enough to take care of itself. Her mother had sighed then, expostulated then, just as she sighed and expostulated now. And surrender now was a matter of time only.

However, Nita tactfully postponed the subject of shoes, and skipped to a closet in the living-room. From there she took a pink linene dress, modeled—with ninety-five cents—after a pink charmeuse gown that Josephine had worn once to Brell's hall. She began hastily to baste in the low-cut neck a scrap of rose chiffon that she had found in the sweepings from the workroom. A soiled scrap, but she deftly put the cleaner side uppermost.

Her mother had not missed the glimmer of satisfaction. Through the door, with eyes whose anger was underlaid by hurting fear, she watched Nita dress and primp, shine the shabby toe, pouting a little at the unsatisfactory result, twist her hair into a lovely loose coil, pull the purple and yellow bowl over it. Some people might cavil at such juxtaposition of purple and pink. Nita herself wondered—wished that she had two hats.

"To-morrow," said her mother, "I'm going to tell your father that you're out every night till twelve o'clock."

The grim note in her voice had a decision beyond its usual weak querulousness.

Nita caught it. She whirled around from the small mirror. Of a sudden, the petulance of youth faded from her pretty face. The gay impudence receded from her big black eyes. A hint of insolence akin to Josephine's replaced it, darkened into black steel, darted at her mother like the swift cut of a stiletto.

"I'm working," she flashed. "I don't have to live at home. I can support myself. If he tries to boss me, I'll—I'll run away!"

As a black-sweeping tornado meets a trifling rain-cloud, and sucks it out of its existence, so Nita's menace met and dwarfed her mother's puny threat.

Anger slunk from the older woman's eyes, whipped into flight by a panic that whitened her gray-seamed cheeks, and drew the tired blood from her lips. There had been other girls in that street who had rebelled at home and poverty and parental stricture—who had gone away never to come back.

Across the way, in the second flat, Mrs. Grady's face had been stonily haggard for twelve long months, ever since Janette, her blue eyes sullen, had left.

Over her panic Nita's mother swept a show of bravado. "Don't talk that way, Nita," she ordered fiercely. "And mind—"

With a defiant shrug that threatened to rend the shoulder seams of the flimsy linene, Nita flounced out, ran downstairs. "Stay at home!" she muttered. "I'd almost as soon work."

III

The night air, though warm, seemed fresh after the oppressive atmosphere of the cooped-in flat. Irritation and temper dropped from Nita like the discarded sateen apron of the factory. The joyous impudence beamed again in her eyes.

At the corner, Harry was waiting, looking expectantly toward her. He was clean and handsome in his light gray suit. Nita's mouth curved up in a gay smile. Factory and home were relegated to the limbo of things forgotten.

Harry's dark blue eyes traveled admiringly over the pink linene. "Gee, kid, but you know the colors to wear," he whispered as he helped her up the steps of the street-car.

Beatification fevered Nita's blood. Stay at home?—What preposterous things a parent could ask!

Religion, naturally curly hair, a digestion that obediently takes care of pancakes every morning, a peaceful conscience and a thirty-eight bust are, each and all, great assuagements of the thorn-pricks of life. But nothing gives a woman, be she sixteen or sixty, the same intense spiritual uplift as the public display of a specimen of masculinity whose profile, poise and clothes are of a super-excellence that draws both cotton mes-saline and imported *crêpe de mêtéore* around for a second look.

Nita's foolish heart palpitated with pride as they turned into the dazzling-lighted entrance of Joyland Park, and a tall, freckled blonde in cerise linen jabbed a brunette friend in smart man-nish pique to notice Harry.

Across a deliciously cool lagoon, the bandstand blazed in red-and-green coruscation. Nita's slim young body swayed to the strains of the orchestra. To her very finger tips she was quivering happy. Joyland Park was cool, brilliant, beautiful, turgid with mirth and music and color. Not being of an analytical turn of mind, Nita did not know that adjectives are modified by circumstance—that the superlative degree is more often the result of temperament than fact. Heaven owes much of its charm to the adjacence of hell.

Nita found the four hours between eight A. M. and twelve an eternity of lagging minutes. From eight P. M. till midnight was a whirligig of flying seconds; a swift panorama of merry-go-rounds that swung you far up and out till your blood spun; dancers in pink and blue tights whom barkers loudly labeled Turkish, but whose lineaments were mostly Teutonic; Royal Coasters where you plunged down with a wild shriek of joy and shot up breathless with gay fright; sandwiches served on cool green leaves—and drinks.

Besides a nobby wardrobe and a pair of violet eyes whose tender, luminous glance painted Nita's cheeks pinkier than Nuzzuni's *Poudre de Rose*, Harry possessed an extensive knowledge of the drinks that had the most exquisite colors and the sweetest, tingliest taste. There was one Nita especially liked. Maraschino cherries, slices of pineapple, orange and lemon floated in a tawny, tangy liquid.

She was sipping her third when Harry sighed. They sat at a small round table halfway between the lagoon and the orchestra that just then was wailing "Meet me to-night in Dreamland."

Nita's black eyes looked the inquiry that her mouth, greedily crammed with pineapple, could not frame.

"This is our last night together, Nita,"—gloomily.

She rapidly swallowed the pineapple. "Why?" she demanded.

"I'm going away."

"Going away?" she cried. "Where? You're coming back!"

He sadly shook his head. "No. At least not for years. I've been offered a better position in St. Louis. Can't afford to pass it up. So I'm going—"

"When?"—dully. A fat red cherry floated unnoticed in the glass.

"To-night. And, by George, it's after twelve. I'll have to hurry to take you home and get to the depot by 2:10. I suppose,"—dejectedly, "that you'll forget me in a week."

She was silent. He reached a hand across the table and laid it over her small fingers. "Will you forget me?" he asked tenderly.

"No—I—I—wont." Her slim body no longer swayed to the music. It was rigid. Desolation, like a cerement, enwrapped her. Pink cheeks drooped.

"I'll hate to think of you working back here in that noisy factory," he continued moodily, "while I'm down there. St. Louis,"—irrelevantly, "has amusement parks that skin Joyland a mile."

A sob formed in Nita's throat. At his words, the strains of the violins gave way to the whirr of machines. And tomorrow it wouldn't matter whether six o'clock came soon or late. There would

be nothing afterward but—home. Home that was as hot and noisy as the factory!

"I wish you could come along,"—coaxingly.

The sob swelled. "So do I," she murmured dolefully.

"Why can't you?"—softly.

"Oh!" Nita was startled. Her doleful response had been merely a wistful echo. She had not meant—

"Why can't you?" he repeated, leaning closer.

"You mean—to run away and get married?"

"Of course."

"Oh!"—hesitatingly, "I—I—couldn't—"

"Why?"

Nita pondered. There were plenty of good and sufficient reasons. Only—somehow—they floated off into the nebulous out-reaches of thought, and were dissipated before she could catch and imprison them in words.

"Do you like to work in the factory?"

She shook her head.

"I've got a dandy job. I'd buy you plenty of clothes—different clothes." His eyes were tender. But as they traveled down the tawdry pink linene, the tenderness did not mask the obvious contempt. Nita flushed. She had imagined that Harry, being a man, might not know the difference between linene and linen. And now it was quite plain that he liked her in spite of her clothes, not because of them.

The orchestra rippled into a soft fantasia that mocked all reason. Nita gulped the remainder of amber liquid, and fished the cherry out to nibble. There were no substantial reasons for not going, else they would not waver away into nothing.

"Wont you come,"—softly, "Nita?"

In the caressing inflection, Nita heard the promise of a future all music and light.

"Y—Yes,"—breathlessly.

At once Harry motioned the waiter to bring the check, and they left the park. The street-car was filled to overflowing, mostly with laughing couples. Nita laughed too, rather excitedly.

"To-morrow night," Harry whispered,



"Wont you come?"—softly, "Nita!" In the caressing inflection, Nita heard the promise of a future all music and light. "Y—Yea,"—breathlessly.

"I'll show you a place in St. Louis that'll make Joyland look like a pie-pan."

Nita's eyes sparkled happily. She did not notice the triumphantly appraising glitter in her companion's eyes; nor could she read the exultant thought

corner. They had the air of having dressed hastily. One held a crumpled telegram. Four or five men of no particular age, complexion or shape, sat about, reading newspapers, occasionally yawning and glancing up at the round



"I'm going home," she said simply. "You're not. You can't!" He rose and caught her arm.

which flashed through his mind: "This is the easiest one of them all."

The depot, big and brilliant, was not crowded. Trains around 2:10 A. M. are unpopular. A white-haired, reverend-coated gentleman browsed over a pink sporting sheet. Two middle-aged women, presumably sisters, from a similarity of chins and brown skirts, were crying in a

clock over the bulletin blackboard. Across from the seat to which Harry led Nita, sat a fat, frowzy, blowzy woman. A baby, fat and dirty, snuggled in her arms. Battered valises, aged satchels, paper bundles ranging in size from a quart measure to a bushel basket, paper sacks, and children were massed about her topsy-turvily.

Harry left Nita in the high-backed

yellow seat which her slim form only half-filled, and went over to the ticket-window. She watched him proudly. Exhilaration still possessed her.

When he returned, she smiled and blushed under the exultant ardor of his eyes. "To-morrow, Nita," he murmured.

A shriek from the frowzy woman across the way cut him short.

"Tommy!" she wailed, and half rose. The baby, wakened, began to whimper. The woman's full face was contorted by an expression of panic that verged to absurdity. "Where is he?" she demanded wildly of the depot in general.

Around the high yellow backs of the row of seats strolled a small, rotund boy in blue calico rompers. "I aint lost," he announced calmly. "I just went walking around to see—"

Alas for the serenity that should permeate maternal love!

His mother's shriek of fright gurgled into a cry of rage. She grabbed him, shook him, cuffed him, dumped him hard on the seat beside her. "You'll scare me into my grave! Don't you dare move again! I—I thought you were gone!" Panting, she leaned back exhausted.

He sniveled, no longer an explorer but a culprit.

"If all those belonged to me," Harry commented, "I'd be perfectly willing to lose more than one. Nita! Where are you going?"

For Nita had risen. She was breathing hard. The sparkle had died from her eyes, and they were distended with an expression he could not fathom.

"What's the matter?" he demanded roughly.

"I—" She couldn't explain that the panic in that frowzy mother's eyes had brought to her the panic that a few hours before had gleamed at *her*, that remembrance had withered exhilaration.

"I'm going home," she said simply.

"You're not! You can't!" He rose and caught her arm. All the luminous tenderness had vanished. Her eyes were slatily cold. "It's too late!"

"I'm going home," she repeated obstinately. The reasons that refused to come

before now swooped down upon her and were crystallized into one overwhelming argument. And that argument took the expression of haggard stoniness that lay in Mrs. Grady's face.

"Have you any money?" asked Harry. "It's several miles—and you can't walk it, at this time of night."

"N—no," faltered Nita. "Wont you give me a nickel?"

"No, I wont. And,"—cruelly, "with your loud clothes and pink cheeks, the first policeman will pick you up. Then it will be the reformatory for you."

"Come on, Nita," he begged. "Don't be silly. You don't want to go back to that old dirty, hard way of living—"

She shook her head. Without doubt life was hard and gray and grimy. But through all the squalor shone the worried eyes of her mother. He watched her—noted the helplessness that slowly dawned into her eyes. Triumph grew in his.

Nita looked around. The crying sisters had gone. The men scattered about were strange. She shrank from asking them. . . . Suddenly she stepped across to the frowzy woman in the midst of the children, and asked her in a small, trembling, frightened voice for the loan of a nickel.

"I'll send it back to-morrow," she pleaded earnestly.

The woman was surprised. "Good gracious!" Harry, furious, caught the girl's arm, and tried to draw her back.

A woman may be fat, poor and frowzy, and still be able to understand many things. From inside a soiled waist, this one pulled a far from clean handkerchief, knotted and re-knotted. She untied it and from the small hoard of pennies and nickles, she counted out fifteen cents. And Nita knew that every cent of the fifteen had been saved by bitter calculation.

"You better take more than a nickel,"—generously. "It's risky having only one, 'cause you might lose it. And don't bother about sending it back. And—and—be sure and get one from your ma after this before you start."

And Nita scurried home.

Corncob Kelly's Benefit

*The amazing story of that rarest of
race-track characters, an honest jockey*

By Peter B. Kyne

Author of "Hassayampa Jim," "The Three Godfathers," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

PETER B. KYNE is the latest star writer to come from California, the country that produced Bret Harte and Frank Norris. And he is a worthy successor to those two in the art of story telling, for he, too, gets the glowing spirit of the Golden Gate into his tales. "Corncob Kelly's Benefit" is his best effort so far. It's an unusual story, to say the least.

AT the time we are especially interested in Corncob Kelly, he was a boy of sixteen, grown old in all the wisdom and sin and suffering of the world a generation before his time. When one paused before him, halted by his piping, pathetic cry of "Lavender! Sweet Lavender! Ten cents a package! Buy a package, lady!" one forgot, in the clear, cheerful gleam of his honest blue eyes, the whining note in his voice—the whine that is born of the underworld of beggar life: the god-parent to a lie. One remembered only that here was a wraith, apparently from another world, and that he had sweet lavender to sell. In consequence of which one put behind one the natural suspicion that some one was exploiting the boy, and bought a package of lavender.

Such a poor, pathetic little devil! He had flaming red hair and pale blue eyes and a thin face that must have been rus-

set once, but was wan and white and unhealthy now, like a leek that has put forth a sprout in a cellar. It was a safe guess that he weighed eighty-seven pounds, including his crutches and the little lacquered box of lavender suspended around his neck by a thin strap and resting on his hollow little chest. As he sat in his wheel chair, his body bent forward and his cheerful eyes alert for trade, he reminded one of a nondescript little human bird pecking dimes from the passers-by.

In writing about Corncob Kelly, were one to start in at the beginning and write everything, it would make at least a long novelette. Fortunately, however, the earliest record obtainable in the matter of Corncob Kelly does not begin with the notation of his birth in the records of the San Francisco Board of Health. It appears that his parents neglected to report his advent, and his presence in the world was next noted by a nurse



"Slow, too slow," crooned Corncob Kelly. "That pace is pie for Salvation Harry."

who found him squalling in a big basket at the entrance to an Infants' Shelter.

The story of the succeeding twelve years of his life would make dull reading. They were spent in an orphan asylum. Suffice that about this time he was taken from the asylum by a well-dressed, handsome gentleman, who promised to give him a good home and treat him as he would a son of his own, had he been fortunate enough to possess one.

The kind gentleman was Mr. Dan Kelly. He owned race horses, and some of them could race. Mr. Kelly was in the market for an exercise boy. Hence his philanthropy. He installed his ward in a tack-room at the Emeryville race track stables, in lieu of a good home, and gave him over to the society of an apprentice rider and two villainous "swipes," who taught him how to smoke. The boy preferred a corncob pipe—hence his nickname of Corncob. For a surname he took that of Mr. Dan Kelly.

Corncob Kelly took to horses with an enthusiasm that bespoke the presence in his veins of that which Mr. Kelly had first suspected him on sight—to wit, Irish blood. He developed into a splendid exercise boy, with a good, firm seat and "velvet" hands. He was kind to his mounts, cool and patient, and possessed one of the rarest of assets in a good race rider: he was born with a "clock in his head"—an instinctive and wonderful sense of elapsed time. He could judge, almost to a second, the time it would require for a horse, going at a certain speed, to cover a given distance, and more than one owner, watching the little tad galloping Dan Kelly's thoroughbreds around the course, envied Kelly his possession of a boy with such golden possibilities.

By the time Corncob was fourteen years old, he was a full-fledged jockey. He had run the gamut of all race-track events, from a baby race to a handicap.

He was no longer an apprentice and subject to a "pull" in the weights.

One day at Latonia, Dan Kelly, giving Corncob his final instructions as he lifted him into the saddle just prior to a race, warned him not to win with his mount. To his amazement, Corncob glanced down at him sternly.

"I don't like to do any strong-arm work, Dan," he said. "I hate to ride a race that I aint tryin' to win. If I get caught at it, the stewards'll set me down."

"Don't get caught at it, then," commanded Dan Kelly. "And if you value your skin, do what you're told."

Corncob said nothing, but gathered up the reins and pranced out of the paddock on Nyleptha. There was a large, holiday crowd at the track, and by the lusty cheers that greeted him as he jogged past the grandstand he realized that the mare was the favorite in the betting and sensed the responsibility that rested on his thin shoulders.

"Nyleptha can step this route in 39," he told himself. "It aint fair to ask me to pull her in the comp'ny o' these goats, and I aint goin' to do it, if he does flog me."

It will be seen, therefore, that there was a sullen, stupid streak of native honesty in Corncob, which is surprising when we consider his tender years. Despite his resolution, however, he was worried over the outcome—so much so, in fact, that he got away from the post badly, and although he rode Nyleptha as he had never ridden horse before, the mare was just nosed out by a whisker at the finish.

There is a trite old saying that some



"Well, Corncob, what's on your mind?"

defeats are more glorious than victories. That great race marked the beginning of Corncob's rapid rise to fame as a premier jockey. The sporting writers declared the ride he gave Nyleptha to have been the greatest exhibition of the jockey's art ever seen on that track. They warned the betting public to keep its eye on Corncob Kelly. The public, relishing the terrific finish and quite satisfied that it had had an honest run for its money, forgave Corncob its losses and cheered him repeatedly thereafter whenever

he rode to the post for a race.

However, Mr. Dan Kelly was too old a bird to be caught by chaff. He realized that he and his fellow conspirators had cleaned up a tidy little fortune, not because of Corncob Kelly, but in spite of him; so in the privacy of the tack room he took a "bat" to Corncob and impressed upon him the error of his way. Nature had not designed the little fellow to stand a heavy beating; and long before the painful session was finished he was screaming out his promises to Dan Kelly to heed him in the future.

But again that queer, twisted streak developed in Corncob Kelly. It must have been that he was born honest, after all. His tongue had proclaimed him servile, but at heart he was still a rebel, and he had sufficient schooling to enable him to compose a simple letter. He composed one and mailed it to Mr. Bob Martin, secretary of the Jockey Club. He desired Martin to meet him at the quarter pole at eight o'clock the following night, as he had something to tell him.

At eight o'clock the following night,

safe under cover of darkness, Corncob Kelly scuttled across the infield and at the quarter pole he found Bob Martin waiting for him.

"Well, Corncob," he said, "what's on your mind?"

Interlarding his tale with many oaths, Corncob told him. "Dan Kelly wants me to do crooked ridin'. He told me not to win with Nyleptha in the Fabiola Handicap. I got away bad, Mr. Martin, but honest, I tried to win with her, and I'd have done it in another jump. Dan licked me for it. He beat hell out o' me, and that's why none o' Dan Kelly's horses have started since. I aint been able to ride."

"Thank you, Corncob. You're a good, honest boy, even if you do swear like a pirate; and you did well to come and tell me. Had you ridden any fixed races before he sent you out on Nyleptha?"

"Never rode a crooked race in my life, and I aint a-goin' to," replied Corncob.

"Yes, you are, son." The racing secretary patted Corncob kindly. "The next time Dan Kelly gives you the office to pull a horse, I want you to do it. Understand?"

"And I wont be ruled off?"

"No. Just pull the horse and make as bad a job of it as you can."

"But how'll you know I'm goin' to pull him?"

"I'll be at the door of the weighing room in the pagoda when you pass by on your way to the post on the horse you have orders to pull. Just drop your bat and I'll be watching. Then I'll know."

"I twig, Mr. Martin."

"I've been after Kelly for six months, but I've never been able to get him with the goods. If you stand in, Corncob my boy, we'll cinch that crook and rule him off for life. Now don't you worry. And here's a dollar for being a good, honest boy. I don't suppose Dan Kelly lets you have any of the money you earn riding other men's horses."

"Not a red." Corncob pocketed the piece, after first blowing on it for good luck. "Thanks," he added, and slipped back to his tack room.

Three days later Corncob, riding Dan Kelly's sprinter Emperor, dropped his bat as he passed the judges' stand. A groom picked it up and handed it back to him, and Emperor, a six-to-five favorite, finished fourth in a field of nine horses. There were no cheers for Corncob as he turned, after passing the finish and rode back to weigh in, but he got the faintest kind of a smile from Secretary Martin and a black scowl from Dan Kelly, who was waiting for him in the paddock. Corncob had obeyed his orders too well, and Kelly was uneasy. He was furious when the announcer informed the crowd that all bets were off on that race.

"The little skunk is still obstinate," fumed Kelly. "He needn't have been so damned raw about it. I'll lace him well for that."

The newspapers next morning carried the news that Corncob Kelly, one of the most popular jockeys at the Latonia track, had been suspended indefinitely for questionable riding, and that the stewards had ordered an investigation into his disgraceful ride on Emperor. Then, the day following that story, appeared another, together with a picture of Corncob Kelly, the honest jockey, in which the public learned that Dan Kelly, the well-known owner, had been ruled off the turf for life. The inside history of the crooked deal had come out at the stewards' investigation, and in the certain knowledge that there was one really, truly, honest jockey upon whose mounts a man might wager his money, knowing that chance and superior speed alone could rob him of his winnings, the public proceeded to go wild over Corncob Kelly.

Dan Kelly saved Secretary Bob Martin the trouble of petitioning the courts to have Corncob taken from him on the grounds that he was an improper person to raise the boy. He vanished out of Corncob Kelly's life; and with Martin his legally appointed guardian, Corncob went to Emeryville under contract with the Starlight Stables to ride for them for three years at a salary greater than that of most bank presidents.

What an idol of the racing public was

Corncob Kelly during those three memorable weeks, during which he rode at Emeryville race track during the winter meet in California! It was sufficient that Corncob Kelly had the leg up; the previous record of the horse was a small factor in determining the bet with the pikers. They bet on Corncob Kelly, relying on his honesty and marvelous skill to boot a selling-plater home in a stake event. Not once during those three weeks did he have a poor mount. He never failed to put over at least one winner daily.

Then, at the height of his fame as a race rider, Corncob Kelly took a spill in a driving finish and the field rode over him!

There was universal sorrow at the announcement that Corncob Kelly, by many hailed as America's premier jockey, would never ride again. It was a sorrow not unmixed with selfishness, for Kelly had made money for those who had bet on him. For a week the race track habitués remarked: "Too bad about little Kelly, isn't it?" and "There'll never be another like him," etc. And that was all. Such is the ephemeral nature of fame, that within a month the only persons who remembered Corncob Kelly were the clockers who found his name in the records of past performances.

In the meantime, Corncob Kelly lay in a hospital with his hips in a plaster-of-paris cast and one arm and one leg in splints. The verdict of the doctors to Bob Martin was that Corncob's spine was hurt and it was doubtful if he would ever walk again. Martin was a busy man—too busy to spend his time hovering around Corncob Kelly's bed—and as he was the custodian of a few thousand dollars of Corncob's money and he considered it of the utmost importance that Corncob should not only walk again, but

that he should also ride, he told the doctors to spare no expense. The doctors, realizing that Corncob could afford the luxury, operated on him. Then they operated again, and between doctors' bills, nurses' bills, hospital fees, medicines and expensive consultations, Corncob's little fortune dribbled through Martin's generous fingers so rapidly that by the time his ward was able to leave the hospital. Bob Martin discovered a deficit in Corncob's funds.

The winter meeting was drawing to a close at Emeryville and the race track men were preparing for their departure for the northern circuit when the final

blow fell on Corncob Kelly. He was able to leave his invalid's chair by this time and hobble up and down the corridor on crutches, swinging one useless arm and leg (he was suffering from partial paralysis) when Bob Martin called upon him for the last time.

"Corncob," he said, "I hate like sixty to go back on you, but I can't help it. You've got to leave the hospital, because your money's all gone and I can't afford to keep you here any longer. I've had to quit my job as racing secretary and hustle away to Arizona to dodge the tuberculosis bugs. Yesterday was get-away day at the track and I bet my roll on your old friend, Nyleptha. We're both up against it, son. We're like a pair of old skates that have bowed their tendons and can't race any more. I cleaned up enough to take care of us for a year. I ought to give it all to you, Cornie, old pal, and it's too bad I can't. I'm going to live a few months yet."

Corncob took Martin's hand and held it in silent sympathy. The man continued:

"We'll square up with the hospital today and clear out for Phoenix to-morrow night."



"No papers in mine, Bob."

Corncob Kelly shook his head. "Nix, Bob," he protested. "I aint goin'. You gimme a couple o' dollars an' set me up in business an' I'll stick around town and take care o' myself."

"Selling papers, eh. Well, if you could make a bare living at that, it would be better than coming with me. A fellow in my fix is poor company, I'll admit; and if you had a good transfer corner—I'll fix it with Dave Lyons, the sporting editor of the *Chronicle*, and Dave'll fix it up with the traffic police around Lotta's Fountain to take care of you. There's a big niche between two columns in the *Chronicle* building, and your chair will fit in there, and the cops'll protect you from the other kids."

"No papers in mine, Bob. I'd sooner sell sweet lavender. There's money in it and I wont have to fight nobody and do any chasin' around. I'll just sit there in my chair—"

"Lavender! You mean that fragrant old weed that folks lay away their clothes in? Why, what put that notion into your head, son?"

"There was a blind guy sellin' it outside the gate at the Santa Anita track last winter. He was blind, Bob—couldn't even see a customer comin'—an' he told me he made a fair livin' at it. I asked him, because I was thinkin' o' runnin' away from Dan Kelly an' I was figurin' on gettin' into some business. I wanted a game that wasn't worked to death like sellin' papers."

Bob Martin pondered a minute. "Woman trade mostly, I take it."

Corncob nodded.

"All right, Corncob. I'll set you up in the lavender business, and I'll leave a little roll for emergencies with Dave Lyons. We'll just pay these pirates off and go down town and find you a room and a place to board, and get you started to-morrow. Tough racing luck, Corncob, but I've got to light out."

Corncob could only nod sympathetically. He was very, very old in the philosophy of the aged and he knew he was face to face with a tragedy; yet he was a man and could not afford the luxury of tears, but his thin little arms stole confidingly and affectionately around

Bob Martin's neck as that careless Samaritan picked him up in his arms and carried him out to a waiting automobile.

"We'll take a spin through the park and have lunch at the Cliff House," Bob suggested. "What do you say, Corncob? We'll see the world again, just once, before we settle down to this serious business of dy—living."

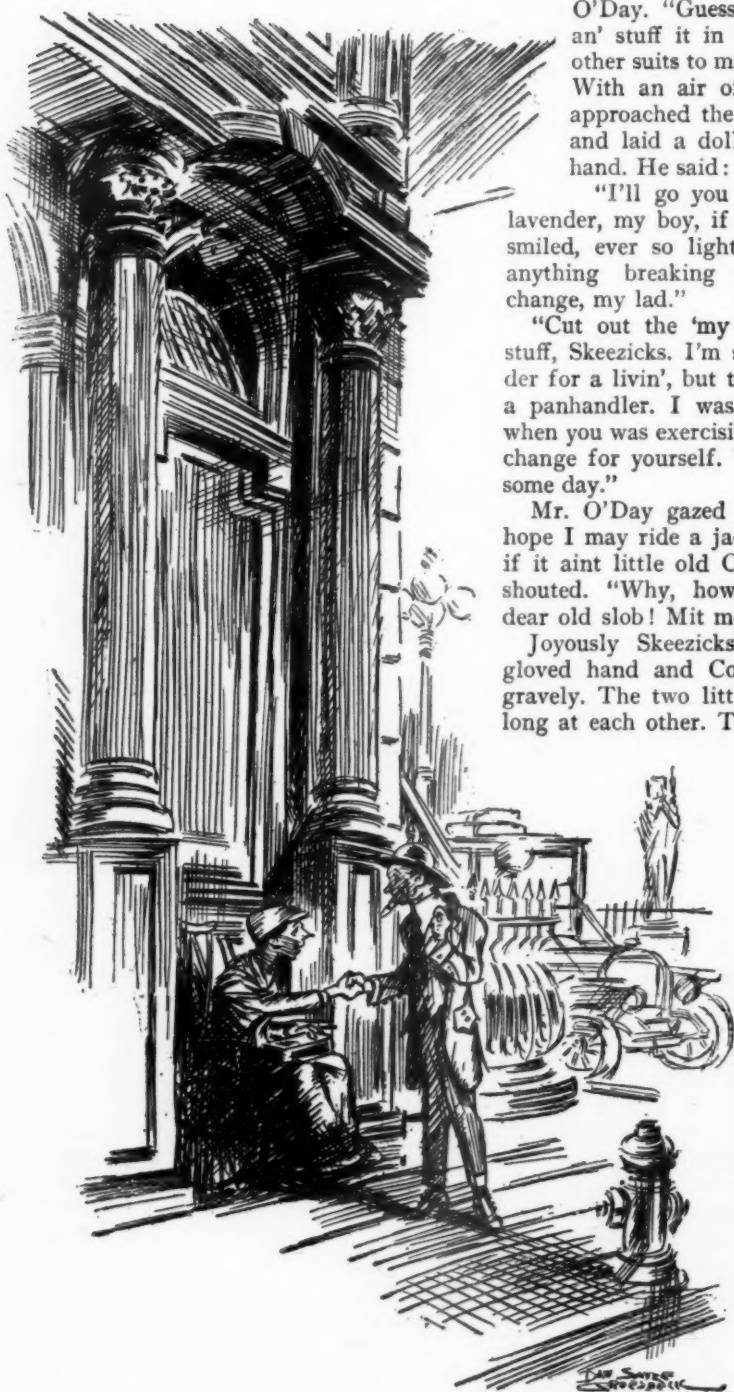
Corncob was agreeable, so they motored down town and picked up Dave Lyons and saw the world together, and then Bob and Dave found Corncob a little room with a respectable old German lady who kept a delicatessen store in Minna street, near Third, and scarcely two blocks from the corner where Corncob was to sell his sweet lavender. Bob Martin was so gay and jolly all that day that Corncob forgot to shed the tears he felt within him when they parted forever.

II

Young Mr. Skeezicks O'Day, his person bedecked in all the glad finery of a real race track sport, breezed up Market street from the Ferry behind a fifty-cent cigar that stuck out of his wizened little face like a backlog. For three months, now, Mr. O'Day had been considered the premier rider at the Emeryville track, and with fame had come more money than the immature Skeezicks knew what to do with. He had invested in six suits of varying checks and stripes, in waistcoats red, white and blue, in green and red striped socks, in a diamond and a derby hat that made him look like a little old German comedian lost in a wilderness of boyish vanity.

But still Skeezicks O'Day was not satisfied. He wanted to spend more money and spend it impressively, and while he was pondering the devilish injustice of a law that caused barkeepers to shake their heads and tell him he was too young to purchase wine, he was aware of a shrill, plaintive voice that cried aloud: "Lavender! Sweet lavender! Only ten cents a package!"

"Crippled little bo' sellin' lavender to the molls," soliloquized Skeezicks



O'Day. "Guess I'll buy some too an' stuff it in my trunk with my other suits to make 'em smell nice." With an air of large emprise he approached the lavender merchant and laid a dollar in the cripple's hand. He said:

"I'll go you once on the sweet lavender, my boy, if it breaks me." He smiled, ever so lightly, at the idea of anything breaking *him*. "Keep the change, my lad."

"Cut out the 'my boy' an' 'my lad' stuff, Skeezicks. I'm sellin' sweet lavender for a livin', but that aint sayin' I'm a panhandler. I was a premier jockey when you was exercisin' horses. Keep the change for yourself. You might need it some day."

Mr. O'Day gazed at the cripple. "I hope I may ride a jackass in the Derby if it aint little old Corncob Kelly," he shouted. "Why, howdy, Corncob, you dear old slob! Mit me."

Joyously Skeezicks thrust forth his gloved hand and Corncob mitted him gravely. The two little old boys looked long at each other. Then said Skeezicks

in his natural, or tack-room voice:

"C o r n c o b, how's the lavender graft?"

"Good. It's always good durin' the winter meetin'. I hang out here an' the race-track crowd comin' up from the Ferry treats me well. Pullin' down a couple o' bucks a day, clean an' legit'-mate, an' makin' an honest livin'. I aint got no kick comin'. How're things comin' wit' you, Skeezicks?"

"Just as you see me, kid. Ridin' for the Starlight Stables an'

"Why, howdy, Corncob, you dear old slob. Mit me!"

makin' good. Got your job when you got spilled."

"I hope you never get spilled, Skeezicks."

Mr. O'Day threw his hands upward and outward as if to imply that he realized he was always taking chances but didn't care. As a matter of fact, he didn't. He was too young.

"You don't want no sweet lavender, Skeezicks," Corncob protested. Pity from a stranger he could stand, but from a pal, a friend of the old lost days—he could not bear that. His back had been broken, but his pride had not. Skeezicks picked up his dollar.

"No," he said soberly. "I was goin' to buy just to help you out, but 's long's you're doin' well— Say, Corncob, why don't you come over to the track to-morrow and see the fellers? Shea an' Stevens an' Red Corbin an' little Nigger Jake are all ridin' this meetin' at Emeryville, an' they'd be glad to see you. 'Dad' Chillip's on the main gate, an' if you get there before the crowd he'll shill you t'rough. Come on over to-morrow. It's St. Patrick's day, with the four-mile race, an' I'm goin' to take a jumpin' jack over the sticks. Come over, kid, an' see me spilled."

Corncob's eyes glistened. Since the day he had been spilled himself his yearning glance had rested on no horse more speedy than a truck animal, and at this meeting with Skeezick's O'Day the old vagabond life of tack room and paddock came rushing back to him. In fancy he heard the bugle calling the horses to the post; he saw them romping down the track, gay ribbons in their glossy manes and tails; he heard again the band playing in the grandstand, the lusty cheers, the spatter of mud from flying hoofs as the field swept under the wire.

His heart ached. Never again could he ride back from a furious finish, doffing his little gay red and green cap to the thundering salvos of the thousands whose hopes and fears—nay, whose very life had ridden with him to victory. Never again could he feel a horse between his knees; never again could he know the fierce, exultant thrill of that

supreme moment when, grasping the reins a little firmer and clucking softly to his mount, he felt the splendid muscles rising and falling with the quickened rhythm that told him his mount still had something left!

With the thought of it all came a fierce, passionate longing to take a peep back into his lost kingdom, to hobble around the stables and look at the horses, to talk shop with the swipes and exercise boys, to watch his old comrades, Shea and Stevens, Nigger Jake, Red Corbin and Skeezicks O'Day jockeying for a flying start, to see the web of the gate fly upward and hear Hoffman, the starter, voice his hoarse: "Come on!"

He looked earnestly at Skeezicks. "Think Dad Chillip'll shill me t'rough?"

"Sure thing."

"Then I'll come to-morrow, Skeezicks. This is the last racing season in California. The legislature's ruled us off, Skeezicks, and I guess after to-morrow I'll never see another horse race."

"I'll speak to Dad Chillip, Corncob, an' tell the fellers you're comin'. An' I'll have a chair for you on the lawn in front o' the clubhouse. They'll let Corncob Kelly into the clubhouse all right. Good-by, Corncob. See you to-morrow, now." And Skeezicks shook hands and continued his stroll up town.

A little later Dave Lyons, of the *Chronicle*, passed on his way from the track. Corncob hailed him.

"Dave," he pleaded wistfully, "take me to the track wit' you to-morrow? They'll shill me t'rough, so you wont be out."

"Take you! Well, I just guess yes. Be ready at one o'clock. We take the one-twenty boat. How would you like to sit in the press box with me?"

"Thanks, Dave, but I got other arrangements. I gotta be out where the fellers can see me."

True to his promise, shortly before one o'clock the next day Dave Lyons appeared, stored Corncob Kelly's chair and his stock of lavender in his own office in the *Chronicle* editorial rooms, picked Corncob and his crutches up in his strong arms and took him to the race

track. Old Dad Chillip welcomed him effusively at the gate and passed Corncob through with the statement that his license as a rider had never been revoked and he was entitled to the courtesy. It pleased Corncob Kelly to have Dad Chillip say this. It was a sop to his pride. Dave Lyons had provided him with a pair of field glasses, and when the two reached the entrance to the clubhouse, the attendant at the gate, having previously been tipped most generously by Skeezecks O'Day, took charge of Corncob Kelly and made him comfortable. Dave Lyons went to the press box.

All that portion of Corncob Kelly that wasn't dead thrilled as the band struck up an Irish melody. He quivered with emotion when the bugle called the horses to the post for the first race, and he could not keep back the tears when "the fellers" waved their bats and shouted: "Oh, you Corncob Kelly! Oh, you old racin' kiddo!" as they pranced by the clubhouse. He was not forgotten!

The presiding judge heard them calling to the broken jockey, and leveled his field-glass at the huddled little figure on the lawn.

"Hello, there's little Kelly," he remarked. "Squarest little tad that ever threw his leg over a horse. He's just pop-eyed with joy to see his pals and the horses again."

"Let's have the poor little cuss up here in the stand with us," suggested one of the assistant judges. "He can have a closer look at the finish and it will tickle him to death to be recognized."

The presiding judge beckoned to a Pinkerton man. "Go over to the clubhouse and tell Corncob Kelly the judges want him up in the stand with them. Carry him over if he can't walk."

"Oh, gee, fellers," was all Corncob could seem to say when the Pinkerton man carried him upstairs into the pagoda and set him on a chair between the judges. "Oh, gee, Judge, it was awful kind o' you to think of it."

The first race was run before he could finish expressing his gratitude.

"No class," was his verdict, as the horses scampered under the wire. "Red

Corbin gave Sairy Gamp an awful ride. I'll bet she didn't step it half a second under 43." He sighed. In the old lost days he had more than once piloted Sairy Gamp over the same course in 41.

The Pinkerton man stuck his head in at the pagoda door. "There's a notice up on the board, judge. Telegram for Corncob Kelly. Shall I get it for him?"

The judge nodded.

"Tip from one o' the kids maybe," Corncob remarked as he opened the telegram a few minutes later. "Rats! It aint even that." He read aloud:

"'Corncob Kelly—Emeryville Race Track.

"Go to cigar stand after last race and get envelope there for you.

"'A Friend.'"

"Funny telegram, aint it, Judge?"

"Somebody thinks he has a sure thing, Corncob, and he's putting down a little bet for you, I guess."

"I dunno who it'd be."

"Lots of good sports would do it if they only knew you were here. Some chap you made a killing for once has seen you and wants to do you a favor without letting on who he is."

Corncob Kelly shook his head. He didn't believe it. In all the world there was but one man who would have thought of doing such a thing—and Bob Martin had been whipped in his fight with the tuberculosis bugs two months before.

The second race was called. Corncob leaned from the pagoda window as the horses passed in review.

"Oooh-hoo! Oh, you Skeezecks O'Day. Scratch Nigger Jake's wool, Skeezecks. It'll give you luck. I wish I was up on that brown colt, Shea. I'd make some o' you 'prentice riders hump yourselves."

They shouted back at him. Until that moment Corncob had never realized how sweet life can be, even to a cripple. He screamed himself hoarse and was almost hysterical with rage as he looked down on that furious finish and saw the big brown colt he had picked for a winner straggle by, the whipper-in for what Kelly considered a sorry field.

"Horses aint what they used to be when I was a kid," he remarked sagely. "Shea gave that colt a good ride, too. I wonder if he wouldn't be better over a longer route. One o' these slow starters, maybe; eh, Judge?"

He looked at his program, and oblivious of the smiles of the judges, studied the list of the horses and their riders. He wanted to get it all squared 'round in his queer little brain. To his great delight he knew them all—horses and riders. There were nine horses entered and the race was

to be for a mile and a sixteenth.

"Little Boy Blue's the class in this," he announced. "Skeezicks can put him across backward. I'll call this race. Little Boy Blue's a legit'mate fav'rite; King Cole, wit' Shea up, figures a place, an' Amarillo, wit' Stevens, will fight Mary Lou, with Corbin, for show. Mary Lou's worth a bet. Salvation Harry, carryin' ninety-eight pounds, will figger to the stretch, and then his tail'll go up. The rest o' the goats don't figger nohow. Salvation Harry used to have a chance at this distance if he was handled right startin' out, but Nigger Jake don't understand the fine points o' race ridin', and the white boys wont let the coon win anyhow. They'll pocket him. But I'll bet if I was up on Salvation Harry I'd make him show. Lay off wit' him in the early goin' and he'll finish strong, but run him out an' he'll quit passin' the paddock. I know that skate. I rode him forty times,

"I'll come through, Judge.
It was a job."



and I was the only jock that ever did get any good out o' him."

He rambled on, expounding his view of the sport of kings, alternately tossing scraps of information to the judges or waving his hand and shouting at some well-known swipec or trainer.

"Say! What's the matter wit' them guys?" Corncob Kelly complained, as with leveled glasses he watched the plunging horses at the post. "If they aint careful they'll give Nigger Jake the edge on the break. Salvation Harry breaks like a flash. This aint his distance, but he can do it if he's handled right. Skeezicks ought to know that. Them other jocks are takin' it too easy wit' the coon tryin' to beat the gate. Holtman's warned him twict. Next time he'll fine him—a-h-h-h! The nigger's beat the barrier!"

Salvation Harry was off to a flying

start and was six lengths in advance as the field closed in behind him in ragged fashion. The crowd cried out once—half a roar and half a great sigh—and then was silent, waiting to cheer the field as it raced by the grandstand for the first time on its way around the mile track. In that silence Corncob Kelly read the unrest that surged through the crowd in the momentary fear that a long shot, having started with a fair advantage, might yet win home in front.

"Salvation Harry by six lengths, Amarillo second, King Cole third. Wake up at the half mile, you Skeezicks," yelled Corncob Kelly, "or you wont land a winner to-day."

The horses went by the pagoda at moderate speed, and with the exception of the fact that Little Boy Blue moved up into third place at the quarter pole, it appeared that none of the boys was anxious to make the pace, all evidently being bent on saving their mounts for the last quarter.

"Slow—too slow," crooned Corncob Kelly. "That pace is pie for Salvation Harry. It's the early speed that kills that brute— Ah! Shea has the bat at work on King Cole—he's passin' Amarillo like he was standin' still. King Cole leads at the half, Salvation Harry second, Little Boy Blue third. Leave it to Old Man O'Day to ride 'em out an' win by himself. Hello! Mary Lou's edgin' up on him. Give her the right o' way, Skeezicks. Let her go. She'll blow up when the real pinch comes— Hello! Amarillo's driftin' back. You fools! Why don't you pocket that nigger and run him hard. Look, Judge! Amarillo's pulled into the heavy goin' next the rail and Shea's had to pull up. She's out o' the race and Mary Lou—"

"Judge, they aint tryin'. They aint, I tell you. Mary Lou leads on the far turn, with King Cole second, Salvation Harry third and Little Boy Blue fourth!" There was scorn supernal in Corncob's voice. "Salvation Harry! That dog! Why, they're all savin' him! I've rode too many races not to know the signs. King Cole an' Mary Lou' racin' their heads off, so they'll be weary in the stretch, and Skeezicks holdin' Harry

easy in the ruck. Skeezicks and' the nigger'll move up turnin' into the stretch, an' Skeezicks'll carry Little Boy Blue wide on the turn. Watch him, Judge. Watch him carry wide and let Salvation Harry through on the rail. What did I tell you? It's a job. Come on Skeezicks, come on! You fool kid, the judges are watchin' you! Come on! You can walk away from him. Use your bat. Look at Jake lift that Salvation Harry horse out o' the muck an' into the dry goin' again. Look at him use the bat, an' he's comin' like a shot. Nothin' to it. He'll win by a head. It was fixed for him from the first—"

He half sobbed and leaned far out the window of the judge's stand as Salvation Harry, stretched to the last limit of his endurance, thudded by, his nostrils red and wide-flung, his breath coming in great, gasping exhalations. With his head at Harry's flank, Little Boy Blue came second, while two lengths in the rear King Cole came on and beat Mary Lou for the show by half a head.

"An' that old crowbait won from Little Boy Blue an' King Cole, the best horses in the Starlight Stables!"

Corncob Kelly laughed the short, mirthless laugh of the cynic who knows. The judges glanced at each other questioningly.

"The little rascal called the turn," said one of them. "And the time! Look at it. It's a disgrace on a fast track."

"An' that Harry horse a mud-lark," shrilled Corncob. "I'd outrun him myself on a fast track."

The presiding judge smiled. "Do you think that race was fixed for Salvation Harry, Corncob?" he queried.

"I don't think it, Judge. I *know* it. Dave Lyons bet a week's salary on Little Boy Blue on my say-so, an' then that dirty little Skeezicks robs him out o' the money. You get Shea an' Stevens an' O'Day and Nigger Jake up here an' make 'em come through, Judge. You can scare it out o' the coon. Go after him hard an' the others'll come t'rough when they see the nigger's goin' to snitch."

Three minutes later, six badly worried jockeys crowded into the pagoda, while three ferocious judges gave them the

"third degree." Their very aspect as they entered was suggestive of guilt; hardened youngsters that they were, they were still boys, and they could not lie in the face of the supreme authority without showing fright in their eyes. The presiding judge centered his fire on Nigger Jake. After two minutes of scolding and accusation, he wigged Nigger Jake's ear and the frightened little negro broke down and began to cry.

The investigation was over. Shea glanced apprehensively at Corbin, and Corbin hung his head and glanced sideways at Skeezicks O'Day. Skeezicks, being wise in his day and generation, and sensing the disgrace impending, coughed propitiously.

"That's right, Skeezicks," soothed Corncob Kelly. "Cough up. You'll never get ruled off for tellin' the truth, an' the coon'll beat you to it in another minute."

Skeezicks' face went very white. With downcast eyes he shifted from one foot to the other and fidgeted with his cap.

"I'll come through, Judge," he faltered. "It was a job."

"How many of you were in on it?"

"All of us, Judge. Every jock in the race—"

"Yassir, Jedge," wailed little Nigger Jake. "Yassir. We was all in on it, sah, on 'count o' de benefit—"

"What owners put you up to this? Out with it now. Who are the higher-ups that put over this job?"

"'Deed, Jedge, sah, there wa'n't no owners in dis job, Jedge. We-all jocks jes' been puttin' over a benefit for Corncob Kelly."

The presiding judge eyed Corncob Kelly suspiciously. Corncob flushed crimson.

"He lies," quavered the cripple. "I aint no crook an' I never took a cent o' crooked money when I was ridin' an' everybody knows it."

"Jake, you quit that blubbering," commanded the judge. "Now, O'Day, you're the ring-leader here. Tell me about this benefit for Corncob. I'm interested. We're not in the habit of havin' such benefits at this track."

"You got one on to-day, Judge. Aint

this the Children's Hospital day at the track, Judge?"

"Yes. But suppose a certain percentage of the gate receipts does go to the Children's Hospital: Is that any excuse for ridin' a fixed race and robbing the public?"

"I know, Judge. But there aint no benefit comin' to old Corncob from the gate receipts, and we all thought he ought to have a benefit. He was a good kid onct, an' now he's all in, down an' out, so us fellers all got together an' fixed it to lay fifty each on Salvation Harry because we knew he'd be a long shot—"

"And then you all pulled your horses and let him win, eh? Upon my word, that was a novel benefit for Corncob. Who placed the bets for you and where are the pool tickets?"

Skeezicks O'Day eyed the presiding judge fearlessly. "You c'n rule me off for life if you want to, Judge, but I aint goin' to answer that question. The pasteboards is over at the cigar stand waitin' for Corncob to call an' get 'em an' cash 'em, but I aint goin' to tell you who left 'em there."

"Take Corncob over to the stand and get those pool tickets," the presiding judge directed to one of his assistants.

Upon their return with the envelope, the judges examined the pool tickets. They called for nearly ten thousand dollars.

"All right, boys. We'll let it pass this time, but remember: No more benefits! Run along now and be good boys hereafter, and if I ever catch you at it again—"

The charitable sextette did not wait for the finish of the sentence. They scrambled down the stairs, leaving Corncob Kelly sobbing in his chair, protesting that he was not a crook and wasn't going to take any crooked money.

"Lovable little scoundrels," murmured the presiding judge, as the last silk-clad figure disappeared.

"I aint goin' to take that money, Judge," wailed Corncob. "They always called me the honest jockey, an' I got a good lavender business worked up an'—"

"Quite right, Corncob. You must never take crooked money, although I

cannot believe that a very heavy curse would go with this. We'll declare all bets off on the fourth race and tear up these pasteboards. Wipe your eyes, old man, and watch these jumping jacks go over the sticks."

The presiding judge sent for the sporting writers in the press box when the last race had been run.

"Boys," he announced, "I have a nice, human interest story to hand out to-day," and he told them about Corncob Kelly's benefit.

It made quite a nice little story. All the papers played it up big, and Skeezicks O'Day and his associate villains received a tremendous ovation next day. Dave Lyons ran two pictures of Corncob Kelly in the *Chronicle*. One, taken in his prime, showed him mounted on Imperator and bore the caption: "Corncob Kelly As He Was." The other picture showed Corncob Kelly in his wheel chair in front of the *Chronicle* building, selling sweet lavender. This picture bore the caption: "Corncob Kelly As He Is."

What a sweet, sad, tearful, sticky old "sob story" they made of it! Dave Lyons induced his managing editor to start a subscription list for the benefit of Corncob Kelly. Not to be outdone, a rival editor engaged a world-renowned surgeon to examine Corncob Kelly, and be-

tween this surgeon and an X-ray the town was presently informed that a splinter of bone had been found in Corncob Kelly's spinal cord, and that when it should be removed (at a cost of one thousand dollars, the eminent surgeon agreeing to turn his fee over to his patient) Corncob Kelly would no longer be paralyzed. It was hinted that he might ride again. Still another managing editor rented a theatre for one matinee and one evening performance, doubled the price of admission and advertised an open-and-above-board benefit for Corncob Kelly. The actors donated their services for the publicity involved; Corncob Kelly sat in a box and was the cynosure of two thousand pairs of eyes. After the performance Corncob's box of sweet lavender was auctioned off, and after quite a lot of spirited bidding, a lady who was ambitious to advertise her philanthropy bid it in for six hundred dollars.

By the time the public hysteria had quite worn off, Corncob Kelly was worth ten thousand dollars; and the eminent surgeon was sticking needles into that dead side of him, and Kelly was saying: "Ouch!"

Moral: *Honesty covers a multitude of sins, and charity makes the best press-agent.*





Barbara's Legacy

By Owen Oliver

ILLUSTRATED BY ALEXANDER POPINI

MONEY in plenty is a dream for most of us. Given it, we would find life all roses. Mr. Oliver, an English star writer, in this story of the different things people said of "Barbara's Legacy," shows the complications which sometimes accompany money.

What Aunt Sarah Said—

YES, you've made a good many alterations in my will, Mr. Deedes; and I've paid you for them. My executors will pay for this one!

You can take six hundred pounds off some of the Institutions—I don't care which—and leave it to my niece Barbara Stokes. She's to get the whole six hundred, mind, and not to pay any swindling taxes out of it. They can rob the dead, not the living... Use any legal phraseology you like, so long as you don't expect me to understand it. If you lawyers put things as plainly as I do, a lot of bother would be saved.

The child's to have six hundred in

actual cash: five hundred to buy her freedom, and a hundred to squander as she pleases. I've no doubt she'll make a foolish use of it. That's why I'm leaving the money to her—because she's a little fool. It's an excellent thing to be a fool, if you're fool enough. I ought to have been more of a fool—or less.

That will do. Give me the pen... You can witness it, Maria... Now you may go. See that lunch is ready for Mr. Deedes when he comes down. I have something to say to him first... Shut the door. She's quite capable of listening.

You've been wondering why I've left Barbara the money. Well, I'll tell you. Five hundred is to pay off the mortgage on her father's farm... Why not leave it to my brother himself? Because I told



"I don't know exactly how you feel about Wrigley; but a girl with your looks might do better."

him that he was an impudent donkey and I wouldn't leave him a penny; and I wont... Suppose she doesn't pay off the mortgage? Suppose you were King Solomon and I was the Queen of Sheba! There's just as much sense in it. The child was going to give more than money for her father: herself!... Yes, I refer to her engagement to young Wrigley. You and I call him "young," but he's an old man to her. Do you suppose a child of eighteen wants to marry a man of thirty-four?... *Some girls?* Yes. Very likely. Not her baby sort! He's just buying her.

You needn't tell me. I know all about it. He took over the mortgage with his father's business. A safe five per cent wasn't good enough for his modern ideas. He saw a better investment for the money. He was going to foreclose, till Barbara came home from school abroad

—a little, pretty, smiling miss, with a great golden plait down her back. Her mother had that soft look, when she was a girl, I remember. She was steel underneath; but Barbara's putty, like her father. If he'd had *my* backbone he wouldn't be in this mess... A good fellow? Umph! A good donkey! He hadn't the courage to curb that woman's extravagance or his elder daughters'; and so he got into this state.

Young Wrigley went there to threaten proceedings... Oh, no! I don't suggest that he was brutal... I'll call him "a gentleman," if you like. A man can be a gentleman and cut a woman's heart out. *I know...* Your gentleman went to John's, and saw little Barbara. He thought her pink face and gold plait and pretty smile a better investment than the one he had in mind. She'd give her little soul for her "precious daddy;" and I've no doubt that woman urged her on. So she sold herself. Now she can buy herself back. That's what the five hundred pounds is for... The odd hun-

dred? Pshaw! An old woman's whim. She was sweet to her crabbed old aunt, when I called. I don't suppose she meant to be sweet. It's just her way. I liked it; and I'm an old fool. You knew that before, didn't you? You ought to thank Heaven for fools. Where would you lawyers be without them?

What Her Mother Said—

I think you are quite right, Barbara. I have no doubt that your aunt meant you to pay off the mortgage, no doubt whatever. It must have been on her conscience, that she ought to do something for your father; but she always declared that she wouldn't, and she stuck to what she said, right or wrong. It was generally wrong in my experience. A more stubborn, cantankerous, spiteful—Barbara, I am astonished at you! It is not for a child to correct her parent...

Speaking ill of the dead? How dare you say such a thing. I am the last person in the world to speak ill of anybody, but I must say that your aunt— Whatever are you crying about?... She must have liked you? Why shouldn't she? It's no credit to her. You are her own brother's child. For the matter of that, so is Bessie, and so is Mabel. She's left it to you; and you propose to do what is right. I'm not finding fault with you.

There may be some advantage to *yourself* in paying off the mortgage. I don't know exactly how you feel about Wrigley; but a girl with your looks might do better. I was very like you when I was young, and might be still, if the looks hadn't been worried out of me, with the struggle to keep your father's head above water. He was always the most imprudent... Who's asking you to listen to anything against your father? I'm not saying anything behind his back that I wouldn't say to his face. Many's the time I've told him ... You won't listen! I wish you were a few years younger, Miss. I'd...

There, there! It's no use quarreling. You're going to do what's right. What I wanted to say, if you'd let me get a word in, was that I don't consider that you need feel bound to Wrigley now. A girl can always find some excuse to break off an engagement. I noticed the squire's son staring at you, and... Where are you going?...

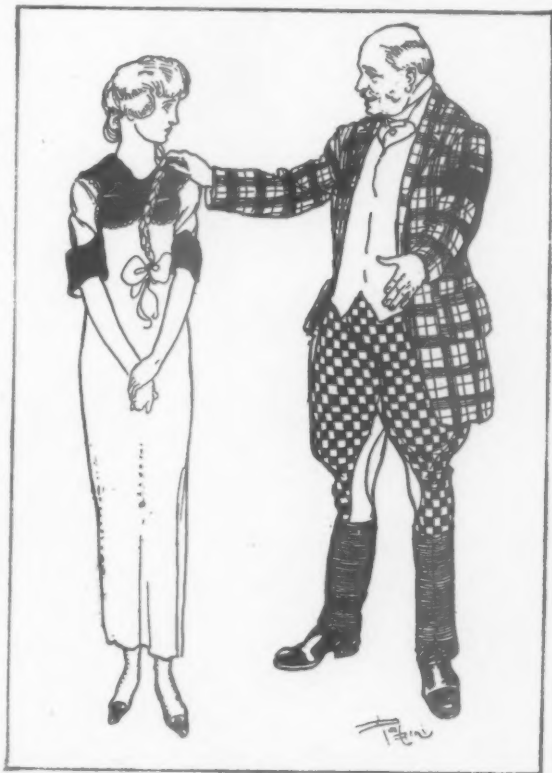
I don't know what girls are coming to nowadays! It's a mystery to me how Barbara came to be so different from the others. If only Bessie and Mabel had her looks, I could do something with *them*. They've three times her common sense... It's a good job that Sarah didn't leave the legacy to either of them. Bessie wouldn't have paid off the mortgage; and I'm not sure about Mabel. But Barbara will, all right.

What Her Father Said—

Pay off the mortgage, Babs? As if I'd take your money, my little comfort!... No, no! You're not going to coax me, you witch!... No, dear. That money's going to help my little girl to start her house with something of her own. I shall manage all right. There's no need to worry about me. Harry won't be hard on his father-in-law; and we're quite good friends now we know each other better.

You see, he was new to the place when the—the little trouble arose; and of course he looked at it just as a commercial transaction with a stranger. It was only natural. I've no doubt he *could* have done better with the money. He's a smart chap, and he knows all about investments.

If he thinks I ought to pay a little more interest I sha'n't dispute it. I can manage the interest all right. Things



"As if I'd take your money!"

will look up soon. They're sure to look up soon. I must keep an eye on my expenditure... Oh! I spend quite enough on myself, my dear; quite enough... Yes. I must ask Mother and the girls to help, but— You see, Babs, they naturally like to be smart. They're such fine women; and clothes set them off... We shall manage very nicely. Don't you trouble about it.

You want to do something for your "dear old dad." Do you? My dear, I'll tell you a secret. You do. You've been my little "comfort" ever since you were a baby—a naughty little baby, and many a time I've walked the bedroom floor with you! It was always "Dad, dad, dad!" That was the first word you said, and you were only six months old then. You always stuck to "dad;" and you do, eh, Babsie...

After all, what does a man want money for? Isn't it to see his children comfortably settled? You've relieved me of saving up for you by settling yourself, sly little miss. Fancy your having the impudence to be engaged at eighteen, and before your big sisters... He's a good chap, too. He'll let me keep on the mortgage, and I shall manage the interest all right. Farming's been bad for a long time, but I've an idea it's soon going to take a turn for the better... I can't accept your money, Babsie darling; but I'll thank God in my prayers that my little girl offered it. I must talk to Harry about investing it for you. He's a clever chap, and he'll know what to do. It will give you a good start. It's a great comfort to know that you are doing so well for yourself, a great comfort, Babsie.

What Her Sister Bessie Said—

Ye-es. I supposed you'd pay off the mortgage. I don't see what else you could do. You had no moral claim on the money. If she wanted to do what was just, Mabel and I were her nieces, too; and of course *we* should have given it to Father; and he would have cut himself free from the mortgage, and you.

What do I mean? Well, I should have

thought my meaning was plain enough. I don't believe in hypocrisy; and if a girl your age gets engaged to a man nearly twice as old... One understands things that one doesn't talk about. Personally, I hold that you have a duty to yourself. I couldn't square it with *my* conscience to marry a man for his money, still less to deliberately set my cap at him...

Do you mean to tell me that you didn't make up your mind to marry him, as soon as you heard about the mortgage... But? But what? ...Of course he's

been nice to you! If he hadn't wanted to be nice to you, he wouldn't have proposed... I dare say he does "care for you." A man can easily care for any woman who's tolerably good-looking...

Well, I'm not going to advise you, one way or another. You're in a position to please yourself... I don't see that *he* has any claim to consideration. He must have known perfectly well why you accepted him; and if a man chooses to put pressure on a girl in that way... To let her put pressure on herself, then, if you prefer—and to buy her like potatoes, he can't grumble if she buys them back when she has the money...



"You had no moral claim on the money."

You never *do* know what to do, Barbara... Conscience? People like you use conscience as an excuse for cowardice, it seems to me. If you behave sensibly, you'll be mistress of the Hall. Think what a splendid thing that would be for all of us!... The young squire never took his eyes off you all church time...

Couldn't? Barbara, you're a little fool! You've only to say to him, "Here's your five hundred; and here's your ring." He's no better than a swindling, usurious money-lender!... Well, if you can't take a little advice for your good without whimpering like a small child!

What Her Sister Mabel Said—

Well, Babs, goose? All alone? You look a little mope... Here, come and hug me, baby. You *are* a goose; but I always did like you, you know.

I suppose Mother and Bess have been ragging you about your legacy?... You should do as I do: spit more fire than they can!

I don't grudge you the old legacy, anyway. I'm glad it didn't come to me. I should have known I ought to give it to Dad; and what's the use of money to poor old Dad? He only sinks it in "improvements" that don't improve! I should have wanted desperately to sink it in myself! Now I can say I'd have given it to him...

Do you know, Babs, I believe I *might* have, because I should have felt that it really would do one good thing. He

would soon have lost the money, and mortgaged the farm again—just as he did when Uncle Tom left him something—but he couldn't have mortgaged *you* again. Some one would have married you before then, my pretty creature!...

You are a pretty creature, Babs! Let me wipe your eyes and show you Babs in the glass... Now you're smiling...

Kind old Sis? Poof! I'm only kind because you're a sort of pretty dolly to me. I used to pretend that, when you were a baby. I like a dolly to play with!

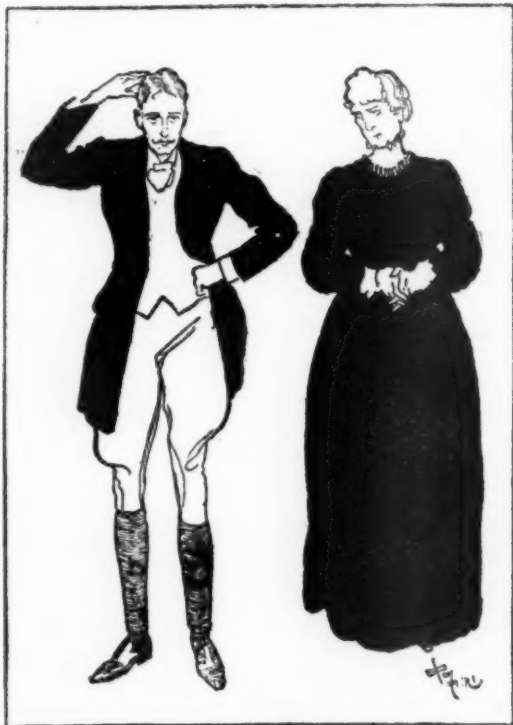
...Do you know, Babs, I'm rather a better girl since I've been engaged. You see, Dick believes in me... He's a *good* boy, my old Dick. I expect he'd have made me pay off the mortgage. Donkey!... Oh, yes! I know what *you* believe. You always did believe in me, didn't you, my little wax dolly!

I believe in my dolly; and that's why I want to say something serious to you... Conscience is all very well, Babs; but mind that conscience is right. There's one thing that a



"I suppose Mother and Bess have been ragging you about your legacy."

woman's whole life turns on, Babs darling: loving the right man. *I know*. Don't set two lives wrong by any cant about a promise. You'd better break a promise than a heart. Yours would break so easily, my dear little wax dolly... It's no use trying to "explain," Babs. I know; and you know. Promise me that you won't marry any man unless you love him... *Promise me, Babs...* Kiss me for true then... There, little wax dolly! That's all right... There's the man I



"I don't want her to marry me for that, unless she—"

love asking for me... Don't *you* think I'm nicer since I have been engaged, Babs? I don't squabble nearly so much, if you notice.

What His Mother Said—

So Barbara wishes to pay off the mortgage. *And what then?*.... I think you do understand me, Harry; but I'll put it plainly. I am a plain-spoken woman, as you know. Does it mean that she is going to break off your engagement?...

No, I haven't been talking to "some old cats;" but I have heard some talk; and old cats get hold of the truth sometimes. They seem to think that Barbara accepted you on account of the mortgage... It is unnecessary to say that to me, Harry. I know quite well that you put no pressure on the child... No, I am not relying upon malicious old gossips—unless you call me one. I have had my doubts from the first... You are wrong. I am not prejudiced against

Barbara. She is a foolish child; but she will make a good wife. As a matter of fact, I rather like her.

I tell you for one reason only, Harry. I don't want a blow to fall upon you unaware... Yes, I am afraid I expect it to fall... There is no reason whatever why a young girl should not care for you, and be a suitable wife...

In my experience there are two kinds of young girls: those who can't care for anyone but a boy, and those who can't care for anyone but an older man. I place Barbara in the "boy-girl" class...

I, also, hope I'm wrong, since you are so fond of her... Yes, I reckon love. I am not a demonstrative woman; but I—I thought a great deal of your father... And of you, my boy...

What is the practical conclusion? That is like my practical son! My conclusion is that you had better put the point plainly to Barbara, and find out. Remember this: A wife who doesn't want you isn't worth having; and

you'd better find out before marriage than after. Good-night, my boy... *Your mother cares for you.*

What He Said—

Good-morning, Mother... I look the truth then. I haven't slept very well... We're not much of a family for sentiment—not for talking it anyhow—and I—I didn't say what I felt last night. I—thank you very much, Mother. Of course I—I've always appreciated you more than I say, you know.

About Barbara: I've been thinking it over; and I believe it *was* the mortgage. But I don't believe she'll break it off. She'll think she's bound in honor to me; and she knows I want her... I won't take her that way, of course; but I'm going to make a fight for her... I think I shall say, "Look here, Babs. I know why you accepted me, and I don't want you to do it like that. I'd rather you'd be happy with some one else than unhappy

with me. But we've had rather a good time while we've been engaged. It's been—jolly. Will you give me a chance to try if I can't make you like me, and accept me for that, because... Because I..."

I don't know if I ought to tell her how I feel about her. I don't want her to marry me for that, unless she— You think she isn't the sort to care for a chap who's a good bit older, and I—I can't take advantage of her... I shall say, "I only beg one thing of you! Be honest with me"... She will be, Mother. I can trust her. Good little Babs!

What Barbara Said—

Oh, Harry! I'm so glad you've come! ...Are you cross with me?... Sure?... I sha'n't tell you what you didn't do. You'll have to guess... Look at me and then perhaps you'll think... Yes. That was what you forgot... You didn't ask me to... There then! Now I want to tell you something tremendously important.

It's about the legacy. Of course I must pay off that silly old mortgage... Father has agreed now, but— If you were as nice to me as you are sometimes, I think I could explain better.

You see, Father's my trustee; and I can't use the money till I'm twenty-one without his consent; and he declared that he wouldn't take my money. Mother persuaded him last night... She—I expect you'll be cross; but there really wasn't any other way of getting over him. She made out that I was only engaged to you to stop you from—what is your lawyer's word? Closing.... Foreclosing. That's it! To stop you from foreclosing the—the thing—and taking our farm...

She said it was buying my freedom...

Daddy didn't quite believe it at first. He said he'd noticed us very carefully, and he had been satisfied that we were very fond of each other; but Mother told him that I wanted to break off the engagement... He made me say ever so solemnly that I was going to, as soon as you took the money... So you'll let me, wont you, Harry, and...

Harry dear! Harry darling! You look so ill!... Don't you understand? When it's all settled, we'll be engaged again... Of course I want to! I do, do, do...

It was the mortgage at first; and I expect I'd have done it for that; but I did like you first off. Then I liked you more. Then very much—very, very much... Now I should die without you!...

Oh, Harry! What a clever way that would be! And what a nice one! Of course, if I married you next month, they wouldn't worry about the mortgage... Yes! You could tear it up; and I could pay you when I was twenty-one, couldn't I?...

No, I don't want the mortgage for a wedding-present. It would look as if you bought me; and I'm sure I'm not worth five hundred pounds!... Oh! To *you*! I'm going to be worth five millions to you, sir!

That settles the old legacy, except the hundred pounds. I am going to save sixty in case *we* have a rainy day. did you notice the "we," sir?... The rest is to buy presents. Five each for Father and Mother and the girls—but I expect I shall spend a little more on Father's and Mabel's—and ten for you, and what's left for me. What will you have, Harry, out of my legacy?... But, you see, the niceness of the legacy is *sharing it with you!*



The "Younger Set" In Pembina

By Walter Jones

Author of "A Barber Shop Sport," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM VAN DRESSER

EVER since Walter Jones wrote his famous "A Barber Shop Sport," editors have been importuning him to write another story of small-town life. And here it is—the story of a girl who is a "has been" in a town where not a dozen fellows own dress suits, and a young New Yorker. Perhaps the most charming part of "The 'Younger Set' in Pembina" is its ending—No writer but one absolutely sure of himself would have attempted it.

THEN you *are* from New York?"
"Yes."
"You don't mean you *really* live there?"

"But I do. Why? You think they oughtn't to let 'em around loose—New Yorkers?"

"Oh, I didn't intend to be rude, but I—I never dared to hope I'd actually meet anybody that was from New York."

"Gad, what a hope!" chuckled Jay Irwin Browne inwardly. But aloud: "No? And I've never dared to hope I'd meet anybody that wasn't. I'm sorry the Big Street didn't send you a more attractive sample."

He waited a moment for the smart reply that didn't come, then looked down into her face. It was frankly flushed and troubled. Evidently there was no give and take in her. She didn't know how to talk, probably didn't know she was alive. One phrase more and she would decide he was making fun of her. But what did it matter? Only a dull little middle-Western thing in green. Nice enough—but the woods were full of 'em! And yet—

"I'm sure," he said gravely, "it's a corking musicale your home talent has

given here to-night; your Club rooms"—he indicated, with an inward wince, their vivid hangings—"are certainly cheerful; and from what I've seen of them, the younger set seem a mighty pleasant crowd. I don't see why you need envy New York. I should think life would be much more satisfactory right here in Pembina."

"How—how *could* it, Mr. Browne?"

"Why, I should think it would be just like one big family: you're all in on everything. There's so much better chance to get acquainted—in New York one never sees anything of one's friends. Here everybody knows all about—"

"That's just it," she flashed. "Everybody knows all about everybody else!"

He raised a mental eyebrow. For such a dull little thing! "Well, isn't that pleasant?"

"Would you call it pleasant"—her knuckles showed white, clenched around the painted stick of her fan—"to have everybody know how much you paid for your spring hat, and why you weren't invited into the Entre Nous Club, and how many dances you had at the last Jolly Bachelors' with—"

She broke off suddenly, her eyes veiling the intimacy of vehemence her lips had betrayed. "Oh, I didn't mean to



The "younger set" all crowded about the piano, and each number he played he assured them was newer and more wicked than "Everybody's Doing It."

talk that way about my home town. Pembina is a pleasant place. And we do have awfully good times here. Have you seen the view from Boulder Hill? Some visitors call it as fine as any in the state. I shouldn't want you to think—"

In the midst of her apologies, Bob came and whisked him away. "For hat's sake, who wished Lucille Shayne on you? I've been looking for you everywhere to meet this flock of skirts over by the punch-bowl. Get the blonde in pink. The one that just sang. She thinks she has it on Melba. Kid her along. I used to fall for her in the high school. And say, Jay, they're wise to it somehow that you tickle the tins. After refreshments, tear off some rags and they'll go crazy."

The ensemble in pink had already caught his eye and Jay Irwin sailed in. It was the sort of thing he ate right up. The "younger set" all crowded about the piano, and each number he played he assured them was newer and more wicked than "Everybody's Doing It," and he soon saw that he was making a night which would go down in Pembina's history. They asked him if he could dance the Turkey Trot, and when he said he could, one venturesome damsel volunteered that she had seen it in Cleveland, and she thought, if he "led" her real strong—

For a moment Jay Irwin was tempted. Looking up, to gauge how the chaperons would take it, his glance fell upon Lucille Shayne. She was standing on the far edge of the gay circle, her arm linked in an older woman's. There was a droop even to her crinkly brown hair, and, except that her eyes were bright upon him, she seemed quite pitifully out of it all. A sudden change of mood shifted over Jay Irwin. There were things in those sad, shy, eager eyes that interested him more than the Turkey Trot. With a couple of ballyhoo chords and a brusque laugh he wheeled around and said that was all for tonight.

But Miss Shayne was not among Pembina's fair that gathered about him to say good-night. "I just love rags!" admitted the pink one with glowing en-

thusiasm. And "Didn't I always tell you those New Yorkers were *absolute dreams!*?" demanded the almost-Turkey Trotter of her nearest friend in a hope-to-die whisper. And the air was rent with the pleading query, "You *will* stay over for the dance, wont you, Mr. Browne?"

But all the way back to Bob's, Jay Irwin was speculating half angrily to himself, "I'll bet that little thing in green went home with her mother." As they were undressing, he asked Bob about her.

"What little thing? There were half a dozen—"

"I was talking to her when—"

"The one I rescued you from? Oh, that's only Lucille Shayne! Whatever made you think of her?"

"Nothing, only I—she didn't seem to be having a very good time."

"No, the has-beens never do in this town."

"What do you mean—the has-beens?"

"Why, I mean she had a man once and couldn't hold him, and it queered her with the rest of the fellows. Les' Cotton. You met him in Eddie's pool-room. That stone bank on the corner's his father's. Soon as Les' is out of college, he's going to be assistant cashier. He ran with Lucille all the time in the high school. Then he went East to Dartmouth and got in with a bunch that showed him some real women. Half the college girls he met copped him out. That darned curly hair of his is good for a Smith prom' any time.

"Well, when he came back home, he saw how deadly dull Lucille was. Last year spring vacation it was all off. But he let her down easy. He called once and asked her to the Bachelors' post-Lenten hop—but only two days before. And on her card he only marked the first and last dance and the intermission. You see, in this town you can tell what a fellow thinks of the girl he brings by the number of dances he takes with her. If it's eight, they're engaged; and it always ought to be six. So Lucille knew where she got off and it broke her all up. For two months, they say, she didn't go anywhere; but now, I suppose, she's

getting used to it. It'll be hen parties for hers, and the 'domestic' booth at all the bazaars, and every time she meets a man she'll act as if she thought he was going to snub her."

"But she's a nice enough appearing girl, Bob,"—provincial history was really rather puzzling. "Why doesn't some other fellow—"

"Take what Les' Cotton passed up? You don't know Pembina. But don't waste any sympathy on Lucille's case; she's got lots of company in the has-beens. Are you going to stay for the dance, Jay? The dames are all wild to have you. I know we don't stack up very big beside—"

"You have a couple of real lookers, and, for a small-town crowd, it's the best dressed of any I ever saw. Of course I'll stay."

"Glad you like 'em,"—with the proud sigh of a vindicated native son. "Now there's Evie Harper you might take. She's a classy waltzer. Or Toots Wallace. You could jolly a swell sofa pillow out of Toots. Or—"

"Oh, I've lots of time to decide." Jay Irwin sank luxuriously into the eiderdown. "These Hicksville beds have got it all over New York! You're running out to the farm with your mother in the morning?"

"I'm sorry, yes. Some business about the fences. Want to come along, or—"

"No," said Jay Irwin drowsily, "I guess I'll stick around and explore our village. Maybe I can find the goat and the water wagon."

II

"So this is Boulder Hill?"

"Yes, but I *didn't* promise to show it to you last night; you know I didn't, Mr. Browne. I think you're just *kidding* me! And I oughtn't to have left the girls. We were buying scrim curtains for the Club billiard rooms."

"I'm sorry you are going to feel this way. Bob was occupied this morning, and I was just lonesome and wanted some one to talk to and show me around. But if you consider I've kidnaped you,

I'll return you to your friends and apologize."

"Oh no, I didn't mean that. It's nice of you to *want* me. But you haven't looked *two seconds* at the view! You're the most unusual man I ever met. You just sweep a person right off their feet. I suppose it's—the New York way."

"The New York way—is that different from any other way?"

"Different! Isn't *everything* about New York different?" She sat below him, looking down over the hilltop upon the quiet little town with its clean, shining surfaces stretched up to the spring sun. To the New Yorker it seemed a very attractive vista. "But I don't suppose you've ever thought of it. I don't suppose you've ever thought *anything* about us here in Pembina *at all*. You wouldn't. But we've thought a lot about New York,"—the plurality of the pronoun didn't deceive Jay Irwin. "I don't know how to make you understand. We're small-town people and I guess we've got small-town souls. Maybe it's just envy. Why, I've sat for hours sometimes, looking at the pictures of the New York girls in the Sunday papers and the magazines. Their hair is so beautiful, you know it's professionally done; their smiles are so—so sophisticated; and their clothes are always startling. And then the perfectly grand men! Out here half the boys don't go through the high school and there aren't a dozen dress suits in town. It makes everything at the Club seem so *common*."

"Sometimes you don't mind, and sometimes—maybe when you're at a dance where there aren't enough men to go around; or you're mixing a pan of biscuits, or making over your last year's suit—Pembina *closes in* just as if it was going to *smother* you, and you have to stop right where you are. Then you can almost *see* New York with all the lights they say are along Broadway, and the people getting in and out of their motor cars—they aren't cabs any more, are they?—and hear the music in the restaurants. I've always thought it would be just heaven to eat pistachio ice in a Broadway café with the orches-

tra playing 'Blue Danube!' And then when you try to imagine your own plain Pembina self a part of it all— Oh, you see it *is* true? New York girls *are* different, aren't they, Mr. Browne?"

"If you mean *flash*, perhaps they are; but,"— Jay Irwin sat very quietly. The sound of his own voice was so serious it startled him,— "but if you mean *class*, I don't believe New York girls have anything on any other girls. I've known a good many New York girls. Not one of them could mix a pan of biscuits or make over a suit, and I'm not sure," considered Jay Irwin, "but I would have liked them better if—"

"But a— a classy girl, Mr. Browne?"

"Why, I—I don't just know." He puckered his forehead thoughtfully. "Perhaps it's my notion that class isn't how a girl's hair is done, or the way she smiles, or the clothes she wears; but rather that she be just womanly and sweet, always think well of others and not too well of herself, and take the luck of the road as it comes."

"Yes, but if a girl tried to be all that, still, sometimes maybe she'd ask herself,— maybe if she were a Pembina girl she couldn't *help* asking herself,— 'What's the use?'"

Jay Irwin guessed she was thinking of the blonde youth who had returned from the East with a knowledge of "real women." So he chose his words carefully. "Why, I should say the use is just this: that if a girl tries to be just as fine as she can, nothing else matters. Things are going to come out all right in the end; and if they don't—that isn't Pembina; it's life."

He shied an introspective pebble over the hilltop. For even a New York person of twenty summers he felt oddly mature. Miss Shayne sat silent a moment, obviously under the spell of his philosophy. Then she sprang up with a startled, "Mercy, the sun's right in the top of the sky! We must have been talking an awfully long while. I'll be late for lunch."

A half hour later he left her before a neat, white cottage with a low terrace and a graveled path flanked by lilac bushes.

It was already past noon; but Jay Irwin stopped in at the local telegraph office and sent a couple of "wires:" one to the nearest branch of a famous candy maker and another to the French novelty shop of a Cleveland department store. Both of the telegrams included credit and an admonition to "Rush." When he returned, Bob was kicking impatient splinters out of the veranda rail.

"Have you decided on a dame for the dance yet, Jay? You know there isn't much time—"

"Oh, I've asked her already." Jay Irwin braced his feet far apart and his smile was quite guileless. "It's that little thing in green, the one you were telling me about."

"Lucille Shayne! Holy gravy, man, you haven't gone and mixed yourself up with her! Why, she's a dead one— scarcely hangs with the crowd at all any more. I thought I'd given you the right steer. Why, for over a week everybody in town's been flipping quarters whether it'd be Edie or Toots, and I've let 'em think— If you go and take Shayne now, it'll get me in bad all around."

"I'm sorry, kid, but hang it, didn't you tell me to look 'em over at the musicale and pick the one I wanted?"

"Ye-s,—sure,—of course it's all right, old man. I didn't mean any of that peevish stuff, only I—I didn't realize we had such a different taste in women, that's all. Look here,"— he faced Jay Irwin still hopefully,— "if you *want* to take Lucille, all right; but if you've just *plumbed* into asking her, there's still time to switch. Edie has a friend coming from Fort Wayne—"

"If you really wont mind," said Jay Irwin gravely, "I don't think I'll switch."

III

"Lucille isn't ready yet; but if you'll just step into the parlor—" The trim, faded little woman retreated ahead of Jay Irwin's evening splendors and perched herself as shyly, as lightly as a bird on the edge of an old tapestried chair. "Oh, Mr. Browne, I want to tell



"It's nice of you to *want* me. You're the most unusual man I've ever met. You just sweep a person right off their feet. I suppose it's—the New York way."

you how much I enjoyed your call yesterday afternoon, almost as much as Lucille. I was sewing in the sitting-room and left the door open, and I heard—all that bright music you played. It reminded me—"

"I'm afraid ragtime isn't music," laughed Jay Irwin deprecatingly.

"Well, it was *gay* anyway, gayer than we've had in this house in a long time. And it reminded me of—oh, so many things. Of once, when Mr. Shayne was living, and I went with him to New York. You wouldn't think I'd ever been in New York, would you? But I have. It was a very grand hotel we stopped at. I think they called it the Astor House. And that first meal there—we were hungry and tired from off the train—we had a steak that tasted the very best—"

"Oh, yes, I've heard my father speak of the old Astor House steaks. They broiled them across the open grill right before your eyes."

"And in the evening we happened in at a music hall place or something, and a woman came on the stage and sang a song—'Pull 'Em Down, McGinty,' I believe it was. I've always thought she was the *jolliest* woman—"

"Why, it must have been Maggie Cline! And she's still singing 'Mc-Closkey.'"

"Is she? I wonder if she's still as jolly— But that was a good while ago." Her eyes wandered over, half proudly, half sadly, to the old grand piano that dominated the room's musty tidiness. "My brother gave me that for a wedding present. I used to think I'd keep up my music. Lucille's taken a number of terms; but she doesn't play much of any—now." She suddenly rose, listening. "If you'll excuse me, perhaps she'll want me to help her."

When she had gone, Jay Irwin slipped over to the piano; but his fingers rested idly on the keys. Outside, he could hear laughing couples passing on their way to the dance, and far down the street glimmered faintly the lights of the Club. Under his elbow lay a pile of music and he began turning it over. Most of the selections were ballads and

toward the bottom not a few were penciled in a bold, boyish hand, "Leslie Cotton." It was a very orderly pile that did not look as if it had been disturbed in a long time and he evened it up again with a pang of pity for the two foolish young things who were making such a mess of their simple lives. Why couldn't they be satisfied with their own snug little world? Why was it they all fell so hard for New York, these small timers? Young Cotton, yearning for college prom's with "real women;" Lucille, haunting her day-dreams with café music, and taxicabs, and "perfectly grand men;" even staid, faded Mrs. Shayne, carrying a night in an extinct hostelry and a commonplace music hall performance to her grave as the apotheosis of pleasure!

Jay Irwin found himself playing that "Old New York" stuff from "The Red Mill." He looked around the dingy little parlor. His throat tightened. Gad, it was closing in on him! Two whole weeks he had been away from New York! And he hadn't even seen a *World*! What a lot of things could happen! Maybe there was a new headliner at Hammerstein's

A swish of skirts on the staircase startled him out of his reverie and Miss Shayne entered the doorway. "Oh, those perfectly lovely things you sent me!" She advanced almost to him, then stopped, a bright flush on either cheek. "But I'm afraid I can't dress *up* to them. You see I never wore a bandeau in my hair before, and my green wouldn't go with your beautiful bouquet—I mean I haven't any light colored party dress, so I just *had* to wear this plain white."

Jay Irwin took a moment to lock that little old Manhattan picture back into his brain closet, then inspected his companion with polite gravity. The dull green grub of the musicale had become a beautiful white butterfly. Across her hair was a narrow band of silver tissue and against the breast of her simple Swiss gown, in a bed of deep velvet leaves, nestled a bower of tiny satin buds, bound with silver-foil and a cord that hung in dainty, tasseled ends.

Jay Irwin smiled his approval earnestly. "Miss Shayne," he said, "I don't think you need worry. You're just like one of those New York girls out of the magazines."

Her anxious face brightened at this assurance, but all the way to the Club he felt a tremor in the arm that rested lightly on his; and as he left her at the dressing-room door, he guessed it was to the untender mercies of all the Edies and Tootses his asking her had piqued. As he hovered, waiting, he overheard a staccato query, "Why wasn't she at the Sewing Club yesterday?" And a sweetly vitriolic voice replied. "Oh, she had a caller—from New Yawk!" Almost immediately an excited matron with a Grecian nose stalked out of the dressing-room into a group of patronesses: "My dears, you positively must see poor Nellie Shayne's daughter, how she's gotten herself up! They say that Eastern man brought her and she's so airy she can't see anybody. If she thinks she's going to paralyze Pembina with a pair of ten-button gloves, she's mistaken. And her bouquet is the skimpiest thing—the flowers aren't even *real*! I'm not going to let Sidney dance with her."

But, alas, Sidney had already signed for a two-step, and when Lucille emerged, her card was still surrounded by an eager group. One look showed her flushed and troubled to Jay Irwin, yet with a certain hint of defiance that was quite the touch she needed. He surmised the Sewing Club "hadn't done a thing to her!" But he only smiled. He presented her program with careful humility. "It's filled," he said. "Look it over and tell me, are they good dancers?"

She scanned the little gold-rimmed pasteboard eagerly. "Why, Mr. Browne, you've taken *eight* dances!"—but it was a gasp of pleasure. "Romney Porter! Why, he never asks us girls. He says we hop so." She paused with her finger on the "second extra" beside which was written Leslie Cotton's name. "I'm sorry about that," explained Jay Irwin. "It was all there was left. If he's a particular friend, I could scratch one of my own dances."

She hesitated a moment. He could see

the pulses in her temples throb. But she only said, "No, Mr. Browne, not if you really want them all."

He gave her hand a quick pressure that telegraphed, "Buck up, Lucille Shayne!" Then he plunged in to make it one big, dazzling night of split encores, innovated steps, and dozens of ices. He went right down the roster of the Sewing Club, wore a positive path to the punch bowl, promised enough sheet music to stock a shop, and collected a pocketful of embroidered handkerchiefs and near-ivory fans. And when at last the soft-lapsing strains of the home waltz died away, he retired to the smoking den with a black cigar and the judicial ultimatum, "If they aren't decent to her now, they *are* a bunch of cats."

It seemed a long while before Miss Shayne emerged from the dressing-room and joined him at the balustrade. Her face was shining. She tripped down the steps and out of the Club, her feet seeming scarcely to touch the ground. "Oh, Mr. Browne," she cried, "it's been a just heavenly dance! Did you think I never was coming? The girls almost *mobbed* me. And when they caught on to that swagger scent in your flowers, they smelled them nearly to death. What do you think? They all want to come out to the house to-morrow, and use mine for a model, and see if they can't make up some bouquets for themselves."

"They're just *crazy* about you and they've given me all kinds of messages. Lenore Hopkinson—you remember, the one in pink that sang at the musicale—wants me to find out if you *do* think she's got a note in her voice like Melba or if you were only jollying her. And Toots—she's the worst—I'm really ashamed to tell—but she says she'll probably never see you again, and she doesn't care anyway, and I am to tell you from her that you are the best waltzer ever and a—a *handsome devil*! I know what she means: just like the Gibson man out of 'Soldier of Fortune' they have framed in their parlor. And how nice it was of you to teach Edie that Manhattan glide, because she's going down to Hopedale next week, and

of course they'll never have heard of it down there, and when she shows them, maybe she won't be some *monde!*

"Why, we've reached home already! You must go right back to the Club? I'm jealous of the boys giving you that farewell smoker. Mother and I would have liked you to come in for some cakes and a cup of chocolate." It was just conventional, what she said; but the way she said it was, oh, so wistful!

"Chocolate—that sounds good! I'm sorry I can't." Jay Irwin's tone was conventional too; but he felt the muscles in his throat tighten as in the last minute of close play before the whistle, or the time he stood beside the chancel fumbling the ring for Roddy Wiseman, or when the sure-place horse carrying his six months' allowance broke in the stretch. Life didn't often scratch you like that and get under. "This has been such a pleasant evening—I think the most pleasant way to end it would be to sit right here on your porch and talk a while."

"Well, can't we—let's steal a few minutes from the smoker anyway." She brought a couple of sofa pillows and they sat down side by side on the edge of the veranda. The night was very still. A soft haze hung over the dark green of the terrace. The air was dank with the sweet, warm perfumes of spring. "I suppose good-night means good-by, too?"

"Yes. I'm leaving in the morning." Jay Irwin reached out for a spray of honeysuckle and crushed it between the

fingers that longed to clasp themselves about Lucille Shayne's slim, yielding waist. But this was not that kind of an episode.

For a time the girl sat very still; then, looking straight ahead of her into the night, she spoke. "As long as I live I shall remember this evening and these few days of your visit here, Mr. Browne. All my life I've hoped that sometime I'd meet a regular New York man. At last I have. And the really-and-truly has been much nicer even than my

dream. And now that it is all over, I want to thank you—oh, I wonder, can I make you understand—"

"I'm afraid I'm not a 'regular New York man,'" broke in Jay Irwin simply. "but I think I do understand—a little, and I thank you. But why is it all over?" He looked toward her with a subtle smile of very personal query. "If I should run out again with Bob, or perhaps—if some one else—"

"No,"—she shook her head,—"you'll not come back to



"Why, Mr. Browne, you've taken eight dances."

Pembina again—*ever*, will you?"

As he opened his lips to protest lightly, there rushed out of the impatient background of his thoughts, where he had all day restrained them, the importunities of his morning plunge in the big tank at the gymnasium; the forenoon work-out at "Reddy" Mulligan's; his daily sirloin *en casserole* at Sedley's; a smart, gray letter, on satin-finished paper and mailed on Madison Avenue, that reposed even now in his waistcoat pocket; and he realized that

when he again voyaged away from these luxurious necessities, it would be toward more adventurous coasts than Pembina. So he could only answer honestly:

"No, I don't suppose I ever shall. But how—"

"Because you are a New Yorker. And, you see, New York *is* different. But you have made Pembina different for me, too—*how* different, you can never guess. I don't mean the dance to-night—though that was glorious; but just your being *you*, and that talk on Boulder Hill, and—the things that are going to come out all right."

Her voice merged away into a faint, shrill note that pierced far up the street. "Listen, it's the boys! They've got an auto' horn and they're tooting for you. Can you wait a minute longer? If Mother's still up, she'll want to see you."

She called softly through the hall and Mrs. Shayne came presently from the low-lit sitting-room beyond, looking very faded and weary from her dance-vigil, yet with a smile that was brightly grateful to the Eastern visitor who had so distinguished her household. "I do hate to see you go," she said. "I believe your visit in Pembina has meant as much to me as to the young people. You've taken me back to my youth, you and that gay music of yours, and freshened up a lot of memories that hadn't been freshened up in a long while. You have so many acquaintances, so many interests, I suppose you'll soon forget us; but we'll not forget you, Mr. Browne. We're all your friends here, we—"

The horn sounded another summons.

"Oh—I mustn't keep you—good-by. Would you, if it isn't asking too much, *would* you send me a picture postal of Fifth Avenue? Mr. Shayne and I drove down it once—that time I was telling you about—and I'd sort of like to see if it looks natural to me now."

"I sure will. I'll send you a whole album full. And I won't forget, Mrs. Shayne. I guess New York'll never quite crowd Pembina out."

He left her still smiling at him from

the dim background of the hallway, and drew Lucille back to the porch. In these last moments of parting, it came upon him that perhaps, sometimes, in the midst of Broadway and café music, taxicabs and the "sophisticated smiles" of "professionally done" women, he too would have day-dreams, and he wanted to be quite sure about the things that were going to come out all right.

"I forgot," he said casually. "I still have your dance-card. Maybe you'd like to keep it. It was too bad they didn't play that second extra. I hope Mr. Cotton wasn't offended."

"No,"—she took the card with a swift, crimsoning flush,—*"I guess he wasn't. At least he wants to call to-morrow night."*

"I'm glad he wasn't," said Jay Irwin softly. "Now, good-by. As soon as I hit the city, I'll mail you those comic opera scores—and, if you'll let me, I'll write."

"Oh, I'd love to have you! But what could I write *you* that—"

"Why, I'd like to hear who takes Toots to the next dance, and how Miss Hopkinson comes along with her music, and if anybody gets engaged—"

"Well, then," she cut him short with an ingenuous blush, "*I will* write you all the news about us; but, Mr. Browne, before you go—there's one question—I can't wait to write." She faced him suddenly, across a momentous pause. "I've just *got* to ask you: Why—was it *—me?*"

"Why?" He met her glance an instant with steady eyes that hid all knowledge of his answer's power to seal or sear. "Why, I guess because I thought you were a mighty *classy* girl."

She bent her head and her soft, inaudible response told Jay Irwin that his answer had been exquisitely right, and lest he should spoil it with any empty nothings of farewell, he reached out for her hand and held it in a long, cordial clasp. "Good-by; and may the luck of the road be good luck, Lucille Shayne," he said. Then he raised his hat and hurried down the graveled path between the lilac bushes.

The Passionate Friends

*An Absorbing Novel of English Aristocracy
by the Greatest of the English Writers*

By H. G. Wells

Author of "Marriage," "Ann Veronica," "Mr. Polly," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

Complete Resumé of the First Installment

CAN a man be honorable if he marries one woman when he is in love with another, even if that other woman is already married?

Can a woman be honorable if she marries a man for money and position while her heart calls for another?

In this novel a father writes the story of his life, for his son to read when the child comes to manhood, to answer these questions and guide him aright; and in his story, he makes a plea for a broader divorce law in England.

The father, Stephen Stratton, is the son of an English rector. He tells the story of himself and Lady Mary Christian, daughter of one of the most aristocratic families in England. He begins with their childhood meetings in Burnmore Park, the Surrey estate of the Christians, and near which the Stratton rectory stands. At seventeen their friendship becomes love.

They part for three years. When they meet again, Lady Mary is a young aristocrat in a high place, wooed by Justin, one of the richest men in the Empire. Stephen begs Mary to marry him, since their love is even greater now than before. But she declares she wants love, but she does not want to be any man's "possession."

"I love meeting you," she says. "I love your going because it means that afterwards you will come again. But up there, there is a room in the house that is my place—me—my own. Nobody follows me there. I want to go on living that way."

"But if you love—" he protests.

"To you least of all. Don't you see? I want to be wonderful to you, Stephen—age, more than to anyone. I want—I want always to make your heart beat faster. I want always to be coming to you with my own heart beating faster. Always!"

"It isn't how people live," he tells her.

"It is how I want to live," says Mary.

He sees that while she loves him, she is not going to give up her ambition to be a leader in the world of aristocracy for his sake. She insists on secret meetings.

Lady Mary plans a meeting in the garden at Burnmore Park just before she leaves for Scotland, and they stay together that night till three in the morning. There Lady Mary begs: "Love me, my Stephen, love me, dear, love me as if we were never to love again, for perhaps this is the night of our lives;" and there they "lay close in one another's arms on a bank of thyme....as innocent as sleeping children."

IT was in the vein of something evasive in Mary's character that she let me hear first of her engagement to Justin through the *Times*. Away there in Scotland she got, I suppose, new perspectives,

new ideas; the glow of our immediate passion faded. The thing must have been drawing in upon her for some time. Perhaps she had meant to tell me of it all that night when she had summoned me to Burnmore. Looking back now, I am

the more persuaded that she did. But the thing came to me in London with the effect of an immense treachery.

Within a day or so of the newspaper's announcement, she had written me a long letter answering some argument of mine, and saying nothing whatever of the people about her. Even then Justin must have been asking her to marry him. Her mind must have been full of that question. There came a storm of disappointment, humiliation and anger with this realization. I can still feel myself writing and destroying letters to her, letters of satire, of protest. Oddly enough, I cannot recall the letter that at last I sent her, but it is eloquent of the weak boyishness of my position, that I sent it in our usual furtive manner, accepted every precaution that confessed the impossibility of our relationship.

"No," she scribbled back, "you do not understand. I cannot write. I must talk to you."

We had a secret meeting.

With Beatrice Normandy's connivance she managed to get away for the better part of the day, and we spent a long morning in argument in the Botanical Gardens—that obvious solitude—and afterwards we lunched at a little open-air restaurant near the Broad Walk and talked on until nearly four.

We were so young that I think we both felt, beneath our very real and vivid emotions, a gratifying sense of romantic resourcefulness in this prolonged discussion. There is something ridiculously petty and imitative about youth, something, too, naïvely noble and adventurous. I can never determine if older people are less generous and imaginative or merely less absurd.

I still recall the autumnal melancholy of that queer, neglected-looking place, in which I had never been before, and which I have never revisited—a memory of walking along narrow garden paths beside queer, leaf-choked artificial channels of water under yellow-tinted trees, of rustic bridges going nowhere in particular, and of a kind of brickwork ruined castle, greatly decayed and ivy-grown, in which we sat for a long time looking out upon a lawn and a wide

gravel path leading to a colossal frontage of conservatory.

I must have been resentful and bitter in the beginning of that talk. I do not remember that I had any command of the situation or did anything but protest throughout that day. I was too full of the egotism of the young lover to mark Mary's moods and feelings. It was only afterwards that I came to understand that she was not willfully and deliberately following the course that was to separate us, that she was taking it with hesitations and regrets. Yet she spoke plainly enough, she spoke with a manifest sincerity of feeling. And while I had neither the grasp nor the subtlety to get behind her mind, I perceive now as I think things out, that Lady Ladislav had both watched and acted, had determined her daughter's ideas, sown her mind with suggestions, imposed upon her a conception of her situation that now dominated all her thoughts.

"Dear Stephen," reiterated Mary, "I love you. I do, clearly, definitely, deliberately love you. Haven't I told you that? Haven't I made that plain to you?"

"But you are going to marry Justin!"

"Stephen dear, can I possibly marry you? Can I?"

"Why not? Why not make the adventure of life with me? Dare!"

She looked down on me. She was sitting upon a parapet of the brickwork and I was below her. She seemed to be weighing possibilities.

"Why not?" I cried. "Even now. Why not run away with me, throw our two lives together? Do as lovers have dared to do since the beginning of things! Let us go somewhere together—"

"But, Stephen," she asked softly, "where?"

"Anywhere!"

She spoke as an elder might do to a child. "No! tell me where—exactly. Where would it be? Where should we go? How should we live? Tell me. Make me see it, Stephen."

"You are too cruel to me, Mary," I said. "How can I—on the spur of the moment—arrange—?"

"But, dear, suppose it was somewhere

very grimy and narrow! Something—like some of those back streets I came through to get here. Suppose it was some dreadful place. And you had no money. And we were both worried and miserable. One gets ill in such places. If I loved you, Stephen—I mean, if you and I—if you and I were to be together, I should want it to be in sunshine, I should want it to be among beautiful forests and mountains. Somewhere very beautiful. . . .”

“Why not?”

“Because—to-day I know. There are no such places in the world for us. Stephen, they are dreams.”

“For three years now,” I said, “I have dreamed such dreams. . . . Oh!” I cried out, stung by my own words, “but this is cowardice! Why should we submit to this old world! Why should we give up—things you have dreamed as well as I! You said once—to hear my voice—calling in the morning. . . . Let us take each other, Mary, now. *Now!* Let us take each other, and”—I still remember my impotent phrase—“afterwards count the cost!”

“If I were a queen,” said Mary. “But you see, I am not a queen. . . .”

So we talked in fragments and snatches of argument, and all she said made me see more clearly the large hopelessness of my desire. “At least,” I urged, “do not marry Justin now. Give me a chance. Give me three years, Mary, three short years, to work, to do something!”

She knew so clearly now the quality of her own intentions.

“Dear Stephen,” she exclaimed, “if I were to come away with you and marry you, in just a little time I should cease to be your lover; I should be your squaw. I should have to share your worries and make your coffee—and disappoint you, disappoint you and fail you in a hundred ways. Think! Should I be any good as a squaw? How can one love when one knows the coffee isn’t what it should be, and one is giving one’s lover indigestion? And I don’t *want* to be your squaw. I don’t want that at all. It isn’t how I feel for you. I don’t *want* to be your servant and your possession.”

“But you will be Justin’s—squaw; you are going to marry him!”

“That is all different, Stephenage. Between him and me there will be space, air, dignity, endless servants—”

“But,” I choked. “You! He! He will make love to you, Mary.”

“You don’t understand, Stephen.”

“He will make love to you, Mary. Mary! don’t you understand? These things— We’ve never talked of them. . . . You will bear him children!”

“No,” she said.

“But—”

“No. He promises. Stephen—I am to own myself.”

“But—he marries you!”

“Yes. Because he—he admires me. He cannot live without me. He loves my company. He loves to be seen with me. He wants me with him to enjoy all the things he has. Can’t you understand, Stephen?”

“But do you mean—?”

Our eyes met.

“Stephen,” she said, “I swear.”

“But—he hopes.”

“I don’t care. He has promised. I have his promise. I shall be free. Oh! I shall be free—free! He is a different man from you, Stephen. He isn’t so fierce; he isn’t so greedy.”

“But it parts us!”

“Only from impossible things.”

“It parts us.”

“It does not even part us, Stephenage. We shall see one another; we shall talk to one another.”

“I shall lose you.”

“I shall keep you.”

“But I—do you expect me to be content with *this?*”

“I will make you content. Oh! Stephen dear, can’t there be love—love without this clutching, this gripping, this carrying off?”

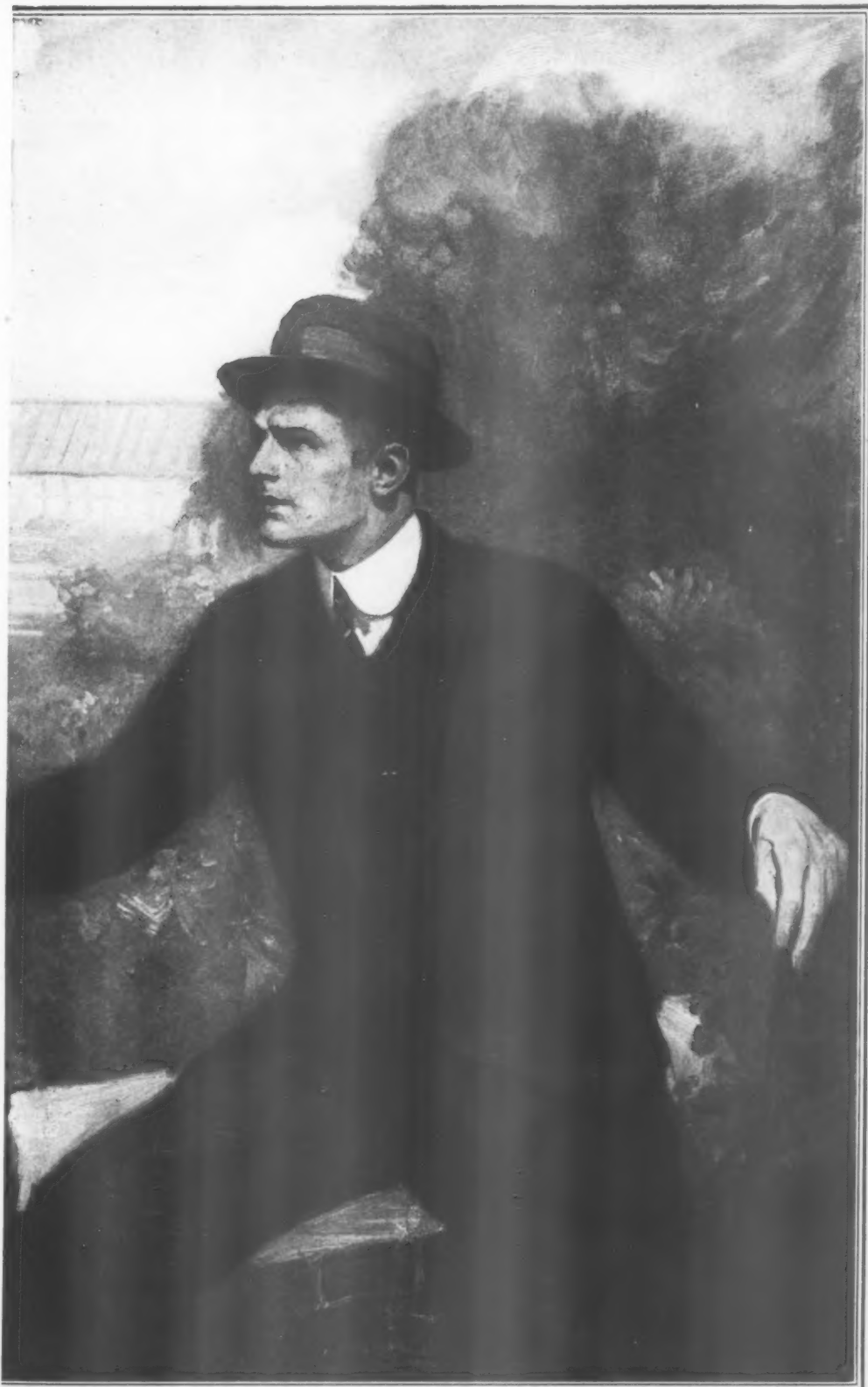
“You will be carried altogether out of my world.”

“If I thought that, Stephen, indeed I would not marry him.”

But I insisted we should be parted, and parted in the end forever, and there I was the wiser of the two. I knew the insatiable urgency within myself. I knew that if I continued to meet Mary, I



She was sitting on a parapet of the brickwork and I was below her . . . "Dear Stephen," she said, "if I were squaw. I should have to share your worries and make your coffee—and disappoint you, disappoint you and the coffee isn't what it should be, and one is giving one's lover indigestion? And I don't want to be your squaw,



to come away with you and marry you, in just a little time I should cease to be your lover; I should be your fail you in a hundred ways. Think! Should I be any good as a squaw? How can one love when one knows I don't want that at all. It isn't how I feel for you. I don't want to be your servant and your possession."

should continue to desire her until I possessed her altogether.

II

I CANNOT reproduce with any greater exactness than this the quality and gist of our day-long conversation. Between us was a deep affection, an instinctive attraction, and our mental temperaments and our fundamental ideas were profoundly incompatible. We were both still very young in quality; we had scarcely begun to think ourselves out; we were greatly swayed by the suggestion of our circumstances; complex, incoherent and formless emotions confused our minds. But I see now that in us there struggled vast creative forces, forces that through a long future, in forms as yet undreamt of, must needs mold the destiny of our race.

Far more than Mary I was accepting the conventions of our time. It seemed to me not merely reasonable, but necessary, that because she loved me, she should place her life in my youthful and inexpert keeping, share my struggles and the real hardships they would have meant for her, devote herself to my happiness, bear me children, be my inspiration in imaginative moments, my squaw, helper and possession through the whole twenty-four hours of every day, and incidentally somehow rear whatever family we happened to produce; and I was still amazed in the depths of my being that she did not reciprocate this simple and comprehensive intention.

I was ready enough, I thought, for equivalent sacrifices. I was prepared to give my whole life, subordinate all my ambitions, to the effort to maintain our home. If only I could have her, have her for my own, I was ready to pledge every hour I had still to live to that service. It seemed mere perversity to me then that she should turn even such vows as that against me.

"But I don't want it, Stephenage," she said. "I don't want it. I want you to go on to the service of the Empire. I want to see you do great things, do all the things we've talked about and written about. Don't you see how much bet-

ter that is for you and for me—and for the world and our lives? I don't want you to become a horrible little specialist in feeding and keeping me."

"Then—*wait* for me!" I cried.

"But—I want to live myself! I don't want to wait. I want a great house, I want a great position, I want space and freedom. I want to have clothes—and be as splendid as your career is going to be. I want to be a great and shining lady in your life. I can't always live as I do now, dependent on my mother, whirled about by her movements, living in her light. Why should I be just a hard-up Vestal Virgin, Stephen, in your honor? You will not be able to marry me for years and years and years—unless you neglect your work, unless you throw away everything that is worth having between us in order just to get me."

"But I want *you*, Mary," I cried, drumming at the little green table with my fist. "I want you. I want nothing else in all the world unless it has to do with you."

"You've got me—as much as anyone will ever have me. You'll always have me. Always I will write to you, talk to you, watch you. Why are you so greedy, Stephen? Why are you so ignoble? If I were to come now and marry you, it wouldn't help you. It would turn you into—a wife-keeper, into the sort of uninteresting, pre-occupied man one sees running after and gloating over the woman he's bought—at the price of his money and his dignity—and everything. . . . It's not proper for a man to live so for a woman and her children. It's dwarfish. It's enslaving. It's—it's indecent, Stephen! I'd hate you so. . . ."

III

WE parted at last at a cab-rank near a bridge over the Canal at the western end of Park Village. I remember that I made a last appeal to her as we walked towards it, and that we loitered on the bridge, careless of who might see us there, in a final conflict of our wills. "Before it is too late, Mary dear," I said.

She shook her head, her white lips pressed together.

"But after the things that have happened. That night—the moonlight!"

"It's not fair," she said, "for you to talk of that. It isn't fair."

"But, Mary, this is parting. This indeed is parting."

She answered never a word.

"Then at least talk to me again for one time more."

"Afterwards," she said. "Afterwards I will talk to you. Don't make things too hard for me, Stephen."

"If I could, I would make this impossible. It's—it's hateful."

She turned to the curb, and for a second or so we stood there without speaking. Then I beckoned to a hansom.

She told me Beatrice Normandy's address.

I helped her into the cab. "Good-by," I said with a weak affectation of an everyday separation, and I turned to the cabman with her instructions.

Then again we looked at one another. The cabman waited. "All right, sir?" he asked.

"Go ahead!" I said, and lifted my hat to the little white face within.

I watched the cab until it vanished round the curve of the road. Then I turned about to a world that had become very large and empty and meaningless.

IV

I STRUGGLED feebly to arrest the course of events. I wrote Mary some violent and bitter letters. I treated her as though she alone were responsible for my life and hers; I said she had diverted my energies, betrayed me, ruined my life. I hinted she was cold-blooded, mercenary, shameless. And it is not the least of all the things I owe to Mary that she understood my passion and forgave those letters and forgot them.

I tried twice to go and see her. But I do not think I need tell you, little son, of these self-inflicted humiliations and degradations. An angry man is none the less a pitiful man because he is injurious. The hope that had held together all the project of my life was gone, and

all my thoughts and emotions lay scattered in confusion. . . .

You see, my little son, there are two sorts of love; we use one name for very different things. The love that a father bears his children; that a mother feels; that comes sometimes, a strange brightness and tenderness that is half pain, at the revelation of some touching aspect of one long known to one; at the sight of a wife bent with fatigue and unsuspecting of one's presence; at the wretchedness and perplexity of some wrongdoing brother; or at an old servant's unanticipated tears—that is love—like the love God must bear us. That is the love we must spread from those of our marrow until it reaches out to all mankind, that will some day reach out to all mankind.

But the love of a young man for a woman takes this quality only in rare moments of illumination and complete assurance. My love for Mary was a demand; it was a wanton claim I scored the more deeply against her for every moment of happiness she gave me. I see now that as I emerged from the first abjection of my admiration and began to feel assured of her affection, I meant nothing by her but to possess her. I did not want her to be happy as I want you to be happy, even at the price of my life; I wanted her. I wanted her as barbarians want a hunted enemy, alive or dead. It was a flaming jealousy to have her mine. That granted, then I was prepared for all devotions. . . .

This is how men love women. Almost as exclusively and fiercely I think do women love men. And the deepest question before humanity is just how far this jealous greed may be subdued to a more generous passion. The fierce jealousy of men for women and women for men is the very heart of all our social jealousies, the underlying tension of this crowded modern life that has grown out of the ampler, simpler, ancient life of men. That is why we compete against one another so bitterly, refuse association and generous co-operations, keep the struggle for existence hard and bitter, hamper and subordinate the women as they in their turn would if they could

hamper and subordinate the men—because each must thoroughly have his own.

And I knew my own heart too well to have any faith in Justin and his word. He was taking what he could, and his mind would never rest until some day he had all. I had seen him only once, but the heavy and resolute profile above his bent back and slender shoulders stuck in my memory.

If he was cruel to Mary, I told her, or broke his least promise to her, I should kill him.

V

MY distress grew rather than diminished in the days immediately before Mary's marriage, and that day itself stands out by itself in my memory, a day of wandering and passionate unrest. My imagination tormented me with thoughts of Justin as a perpetual privileged wooer.

Well, well—I will not tell you, I will not write the ugly mockeries my imagination conjured up. I was constantly on the verge of talking and cursing aloud to myself, or striking aimlessly at nothing with clenched fists. I was too stupid to leave London, too disturbed for work or any distraction of mind. I wandered about the streets of London all day. In the morning I came near going to the church and making some preposterous interruption. And I remember discovering three or four carriages adorned with white favors, and a little waiting crowd outside that extinguished place at the top of Regent Street, and wondering for a moment or so at their common pre-occupation, and then understanding. Of course, another marriage! Of all devilish institutions!

What was I to do with my life now? What was to become of my life? I can still recall the sense of blank unanswerableness with which these questions dominated my mind, and associated with it is an effect of myself as a small human being, singular and apart, wandering through a number of London landscapes.

For a long time I sat upon an iron

seat near some flower beds in a kind of garden that had the headstones of graves arranged in a row against the yellow brick wall. The place was flooded with the amber sunshine of a September afternoon. I shared the seat with a nursemaid in charge of a perambulator, and several scuffling, uneasy children, and I kept repeating to myself: "By now it is all over. The thing is done."

My sense of the enormity of London increased with the twilight, and began to prevail a little against my intense personal wretchedness. I wandered far that night, very far. Some girl accosted me, a thin-faced, ruined child, younger by a year or so than myself. I remembered how I talked to her, foolish, rambling talk. "If you loved a man, and he was poor, you'd wait," I said, "you'd stick to him. You'd not leave him just to get married to a richer man."

We prowled talking for a time and sat upon a seat somewhere near the Regent's Park canal. I rather think I planned to rescue her from a fallen life, but, somehow, we dropped that topic. I know she kissed me. I have a queer impression that it came into my head to marry her. I put all my loose money in her hands at last and went away extraordinarily comforted by her, I know not how, leaving her no doubt wondering greatly.

I did not go to bed that night at all, nor to the office next morning. I never showed myself in the office again. Instead I went straight down to my father, and told him I wanted to go to the war in South Africa forthwith. I had an indistinct memory of a promise I had made Mary to stay in England, but I felt it was altogether unendurable that I should ever meet her again. My father sat at table over the remains of his lunch, and regarded me with astonishment, with the beginnings of protest.

"I want to get away," I said, and to my own amazement and shame, I burst into tears.

"My boy!" he gasped, astonished and terrified. "You've—you've not done—some foolish thing?"

"No," I said, already wiping the tears from my face, "nothing. . . . But I want to go away."



I wandered far that night, very far Some girl accosted me We sat down on a bench
she kissed me . . .

"You shall do as you please," he said, and sat for a moment regarding his only son with unfathomable eyes.

Then he got up with a manner altogether matter-of-fact, came half-way round the table and mixed me a whisky and soda. "It won't be much of a war, I'm told," he said with the siphon in his hands, breaking a silence. "I sometimes wish—I had seen a bit of soldiering. And this seems to be an almost unavoidable war. Now, at any rate, it's unavoidable. . . . Drink this and have a biscuit."

He turned to the mantel-shelf, and filled his pipe, with his broad back to me. "Yes," he said, "you—you'll be interested in the war. I hope—I hope you'll have a good time there. . . ."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

After the War

I

MARY and I did not meet again for five years, and for nearly all that time I remained in South Africa. I went from England a boy; I came back seasoned into manhood. They had been years of crowded experience, rapid yet complicated growth, disillusionment and thought. Responsibility had come to me; I had seen death; I had seen suffering, and held the lives of men in my hands.

When I came back to England at last I was twenty-six. After the peace of Vereeniging I worked under the Repatriation Commission which controlled the distribution of returning prisoners and concentrated population to their homes; for the most part I was distributing stock and grain, and presently manœuvring a sort of ploughing flying column that the dearth of horses and oxen made necessary—work that was certainly as hard as, if far less exciting than, war. That particular work of replanting the desolated country with human beings took hold of my imagination, and for a time at least seemed quite straightforward and understandable. The comfort of ceasing to destroy!

While I had been in South Africa, circumstances had conspired to alter my prospects in life very greatly. Unanticipated freedoms and opportunities had come to me, and it was no longer out of the question for me to think of a Parliamentary career. Our fortunes had altered. My father had ceased to be rector of Burnmore, and had become a comparatively wealthy man.

My second cousin, Reginald Stratton, had been drowned in Finland, and his father had only survived the shock of his death a fortnight; his sister, Arthur Mason's first wife, had died the year before, and my father found himself suddenly the owner of a large stretch of developing downland and building land, and in addition, of considerable investments in northern industrials. It was an odd collusion of mortality; we had had only the coldest of relations with our cousins, and now abruptly through their commercial and speculative activities, which we had always affected to despise and ignore, I was in a position to attempt the realization of my political ambitions.

I came to a new home in a pleasant, plain, red-brick house, a hundred and fifty years old, perhaps, on an open and sunny hillside, sheltered by trees eastward and northward, a few miles to the south-west of Guilford. It had all the gracious proportions, the dignified simplicity, the roomy comfort of the good building of that time. It looked sunward; we breakfasted in sunshine in the library, and outside was an old wall with peach trees and a row of pillar roses heavily in flower. I had, a little, feared this place; Burnham Rectory had been so absolutely home to me with its quiet serenities, its intimately known corners. But I perceived I might have trusted my father's character to preserve his essential atmosphere. He was so much himself as I remembered him, that I did not even observe for a day or so that he had not only aged considerably but discarded the last vestiges of clerical costume in his attire. He met me in front of the house and led me into a wide paneled hall and wrung my hand again and again, deeply moved.

"I'm glad you've come back, Stephen," said my father as we sat together after dinner, with port and tall silver candlesticks and shining mahogany between us. "I've missed you. I've done my best to follow things out there. I've got, I suppose, every press mention there's been of you during the war and since. I've subscribed to two press-cutting agencies, so that if one missed you, the other fellow got you. Perhaps you'll like to read them over one of these days." . . .

The candles had not been brought in, and the view one saw through the big plate glass window behind my father was very clear and splendid. Those little Wealden hills in Surrey and Sussex assume at times, for all that by Swiss standards they are the merest ridges of earth, the dignity and mystery of great mountains. Now, the crests of Hindhead and Blackdown, purple black against the level gold of the evening sky, might have been some high-flung boundary chain. Nearer there gathered banks and pools of luminous lavender-tinted mist out of which hills of pine-wood rose like islands out of the sea. The intervening spaces were magnified to continental dimensions. And the closer, lowlier things over which we looked, the cottages below us, were gray and black and dim, pierced by a few luminous orange windows and with a solitary street lamp shining like a star; the village might have been nestling a mountain's height below instead of a couple of hundred feet.

I left my hearthrug, and walked to the window to survey this.

"Who's got all that land stretching away there; that little blunted sierra of pines and escarpments, I mean?"

My father glanced over his shoulder.

"Wardingham and Baxter share all those coppices," he remarked. "They come up to my corner on each side."

"But the dark heather and pine land beyond. With just the gables of a house among the trees?"

"Oh, *that*," he said with a careful note of indifference. "That's—Justin's. You know Justin. He used to come to Burnmore Park."

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

Lady Mary Justin

I

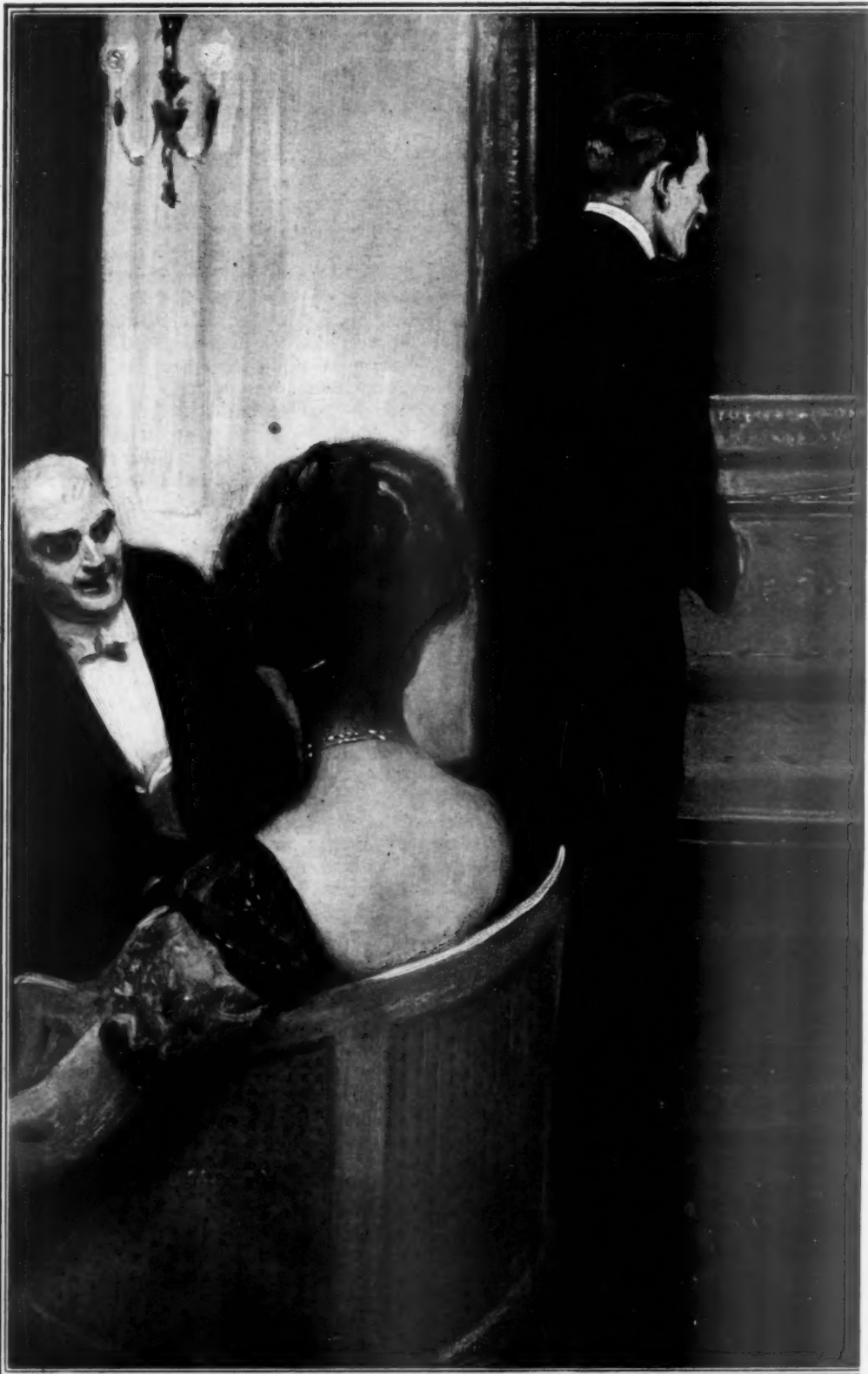
I DID not see Lady Mary Justin for nearly seven months after my return to England. Of course I had known that a meeting was inevitable, and I had taken that very carefully into consideration before I decided to leave South Africa. But many things had happened to me during those crowded years, so that it seemed possible that that former magic would no longer sway and distress me. Not only had new imaginative interests taken hold of me, but—I had parted from adolescence. I was a man. I had been through a great war, seen death abundantly, seen hardship and passion, and known hunger and shame and desire.

And it wasn't only the earthlier aspects of the life about me, but also of the life within me that I had been discovering. The first wonder and innocence, the worshiping, dawn-clear passion of youth had gone out of me forever. . . .

II

WE met at a dinner. It was at a house the Tarvilles had taken for the season in Mayfair. The drawing-room was a big, white, square apartment with several big pictures and a pane of plate glass above the fireplace in the position in which one usually finds a mirror; this showed another room beyond, containing an exceptionally large, gloriously colored portrait in pastel—larger than I had ever thought pastels could be. Except for the pictures, both rooms were almost colorless.

It was a brilliant dinner, with a predominating note of ruby; three of the women wore ruby velvet. Ellersley was present, just back from Arabia, and Ethel Manton, Lady Hendon and the Duchess of Clynes. I was greeted by Lady Tarville, spoke to Ellersley and Lady Hendon, and then discovered a lady in a dress of blue and pearls stand-



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have spoken of me to her. It was as if she had just turned to look at me . . . She struck me in that brief,



room. It was Mary. Some man was beside her, a tall, gray man with a crimson ribbon, and I think he must crowded instant of recognition as being exactly the person she had been when we made love in Burnmore Park.

ing quite still under a picture in the opposite corner of the room, and regarding me attentively. It was Mary. Some man was beside her, a tall, gray man with a broad crimson ribbon, and I think he must have spoken of me to her. It was as if she had just turned to look at me.

Constantly during those intervening months I had been thinking of meeting her. None the less there was a shock, not so much of surprise as of deferred anticipation. There she stood like something amazingly forgotten that was now amazingly recalled. She struck me in that brief crowded instant of recognition as being exactly the person she had been when we had made love in Burnmore Park; there were her eyes, at once frank and sidelong, the old familiar sweep of her hair, the old familiar tilt of the chin, the faint humor of her lip; and at the same time she seemed to be something altogether different from the memories I had cherished: she was something graver, something inherently more splendid than they had recorded. Her face now lighted with recognition.

I went across to her at once, with some dull obviousness upon my lips.

"And so you are back from Africa at last," she said, still unsmiling. "I saw about you in the papers.... You had a good time."

"I had great good luck," I replied.

"I never dreamt when we were boy and girl together that you would make a soldier."

I think I said that luck made soldiers.

Then I think we found a difficulty in going on with our talk, and began a dull little argument that would have been stupidly egotistical on my part if it hadn't been so obviously merely clumsy, about luck making soldiers or only finding them out. I saw that she had not intended to convey any doubt of my military capacity but only of that natural insensitiveness which is supposed to be needed in a soldier. But our minds were remote from the words upon our lips. We were like aphasiacs who say one thing while they intend something altogether different. The impulse that

had brought me across to her had brought me up to a wall of impossible utterances. It was with a real quality of rescue that our hostess came between us to tell us our partners at the dinner-table, and to introduce me to mine.

"You shall have him again on your other side," she said to Lady Mary with a charming smile for me, treating me as if I were a lion in request instead of the mere outsider I was.

We talked very little at dinner. Both of us, I think, were quite unequal to the occasion. Whatever meetings we had imagined, certainly neither of us had thought of this very possible encounter, a long, disconcerting hour side by side. I began to remember old happenings with an astonishing vividness; there within six inches of me was the hand I had kissed; her voice was the same to its lightest shade; her hair flowed off her forehead with the same amazingly familiar wave. Was she too remembering? But I perhaps had changed altogether....

"Why did you go away as you did?" she asked abruptly, when for a moment we were isolated conversationally. "Why did you never write?"

She had still that phantom lisp.

"What else could I do?"

She turned away from me and answered the man on her left, who had just addressed her....

When the mid-dinner change came we talked a little about indifferent things, making a stiff conversation like a bridge over a torrent of unspoken intimacies. We discussed something; I think Lady Tarville's flowers and the Cape flora and gardens. She told me she had a Japanese garden with three Japanese gardeners. They were wonderful little men to watch. "Humming-bird gardeners," she called them. "They wear their native costume."

"We are your neighbors in Surrey," she said, going off abruptly from that.

"We are quite near to your father."

She paused with that characteristic effect of deliberation in her closed lips. Then she added: "I can see the trees behind your father's house from the window of my room."

"Yes," I said. "You take all our southward skyline."

She turned her face to me with the manner of a great lady adding a new acquaintance to her collection. But her eyes met mine very steadily and intimately. "Mr. Stratton," she said—it was the first time in her life she had called me that—"when we come back to Surrey I want you to come and see me and tell me of all the things you are going to do. Will you?"

III

THAT meeting, that revival, must have been late in November or early in December. Already by that time I had met your mother. I write to you, little son, not to you as you are now, but to the man you are some day to be. I write to understand myself, and, so far as I can understand, to make you understand. So I want you to go back with me for a time into the days before your birth, to think not of that dear spirit of love who broods over you three children, that wise, sure mother who rules your life, but of a young and slender girl, Rachel More, younger than you will be when at last this story comes into your hands. For unless you think of her as being a girl, if you let your present knowledge of her fill out this part in our story, you will fail to understand the proportions of these two in my life. So I shall write of her here as Rachel More, as if she were some one as completely dissociated from yourself as Lady Mary; as if she were some one in the story of my life who had as little to do with yours.

I had met her in September. The house my father lived in is about twelve miles away from your mother's home at Ridighanger, and I was taken over by Percy Restall in his motor-car. We punctured a tire in the Ridighanger drive; Restall did his own repairs, and so it was we stayed for nearly four hours and instead of a mere caller I became a familiar friend of the family.

Your mother then was still not eighteen, a soft white slip of a being, tall, slender, brown-haired and silent, with

very still, deep, dark eyes. She and your three aunts formed a very gracious group of young women indeed.

There was tea, and we played tennis and walked about and occasionally visited Restall, who was getting dirtier and dirtier, and crosser and crosser at his repairs, and spreading a continually more remarkable assemblage of parts and instruments over the grass about him. He looked at last more like a pitch in the Caledonian market than a decent country gentleman paying an afternoon call. And then back to more tennis and more talk.

We fell into a discussion of Tariff Reform and I began to talk of things that had been gathering in my mind for some time. I think that for once I may have been eloquent. And in the midst of my demand for ideals in politics, I saw Rachel's face. This, it was manifest, was a new kind of talk to her. Her dark eyes were alight with a beautiful enthusiasm for what I was trying to say, and for what in the light of that glowing reception I seemed to be.

I felt that queer shame one feels when one is taken suddenly at the full value of one's utmost expressions. I stopped almost abruptly. Dumbly her eyes bade me go on, but when I spoke again it was at a lower level....

That look in Rachel's eyes remained with me. My mind had flashed very rapidly from the realization of its significance to the thought that if one could be sure of that, then indeed one could pitch oneself high. Rachel, I felt, had something for me that I needed profoundly, without ever having known before that I needed it. She had the supreme gifts of belief and devotion; in that instant's gleam it seemed she held them out to me.

Never before in my life had it seemed credible to me that anyone could give me that, or that I could hope for such a gift of support and sacrifice. Love as I had known it had been a community and an alliance, a frank, abundant meeting; but this was another kind of love that shone for an instant and promised, and vanished shyly out of sight as Rachel and I looked at one another.

Some interruption occurred. Restall came, I think, blackened by progress, to drink a cup of tea and negotiate the loan of a kitchen skewer. A kitchen skewer, it appeared, was all that was needed to complete his reconstruction in the avenue. And then there was a drift to tennis, and Rachel and I were partners. All this time I was in a state of startled attention towards her, full of this astounding impression that something wonderful and unprecedented had flowed out from her towards my life, full too of doubts now, whether that shining response had ever occurred, whether some trick of light and my brain had not deceived me. I wanted tremendously to talk to her, and did not know how to begin in any serious fashion. Beyond everything I wanted to see again that deep onset of belief....

"Come again," said your grandmother to me, "come again!" after she had tried in vain to make Restall stay for an informal supper. I was all for staying, but Restall said darkly, "There are the lamps."

"But they will be all right," said Mrs. More.

"I can't trust 'em," said Restall, with a deepening gloom. "Not after *that*."

The next time I went over released from Restall's limitations, and stayed to a jolly family supper. I found remarkably few obstacles in my way to a better acquaintance with Rachel. You see I was an entirely eligible and desirable young man in Mrs. More's eyes....

IV

WHEN I recall these long past emotions again, I am struck by the profound essential difference between my feelings for your mother and for Mary. They were so different that it seems scarcely rational to me that they should be called by the same name. Yet each was love, profoundly deep and sincere. The contrast lies, I think, in our relative ages, and our relative maturity; that altered the quality of all our emotions. The one was the love of a man of six-and-twenty, exceptionally

seasoned and experienced and responsible for his years, for a girl still at school, a girl attractively beautiful, mysterious and unknown to him; the other was the love of coevals, who had been playmates and intimate companions, and of whom the woman was certainly as capable and willful as the man.

Now it is exceptional for men to love women of their own age; it is the commoner thing that they should love maidens younger and often much younger than themselves. This is true more particularly of our own class; the masculine thirties and forties marry the feminine twenties; all the prevailing sentiment and usage between the sexes rises naturally out of that. We treat this seniority as though it were a virile characteristic; we treat the man as though he were a natural senior; we expect a weakness, a timid deference, in the girl. Mary and I had loved one another as two rivers run together on the way to the sea; we had grown up side by side to the moment when we kissed.

But I sought your mother, I watched her and desired her and chose her, very tenderly and worshipfully indeed, to be mine. I do not remember that there was any corresponding intention in my mind to be hers. I do not think that that idea came in at all. She was something to be won, something playing an inferior and retreating part. And I was artificial in all my attitudes to her: I thought of what would interest her, what would please her; I knew from the outset that what she saw in me to rouse that deep, shy glow of exaltation in her face was illusion, illusion it was my business to sustain. And so I won her, and long years had to pass, years of secret loneliness and hidden feelings, of preposterous pretences and covert perplexities, before we escaped from that crippling tradition of inequality and looked into one another's eyes with understanding and forgiveness, a woman and a man.

I made no great secret of the interest and attraction I found in Rachel, and the Mores made none of their entire approval of me. I walked over on the second occasion, and Ridinghanger

opened out, a great flower of genial appreciation that I came alone, hiding nothing of its dawning perception that it was Rachel whom I came to see.

Your grandmother's match-making was as honest as the day. There was the same salad of family and visitors as on the former afternoon. There was tea, tennis, and, by your grandmother's suggestion, a walk to see the sunset from the crest of the hill. Rachel and I walked across the breezy moorland together, while I talked and tempted her to talk.

I had never explored the mind of a girl of seventeen before; there was a surprise in all she knew and a delight in all she did not know, and about herself a candor, a fresh simplicity of outlook that was sweeter than the clear air about us, sweeter than sunshine or the rising song of a lark. She believed so gallantly and beautifully; she was so perfectly unaffected and certainly prepared to be a brave and noble person—if only life would let her. And she hadn't as yet any suspicion that life might make that difficult....

I went to Ridinghanger a number of times in the spring and early summer. I talked a great deal with Rachel, and still I did not make love to her. It was always in my mind that I would make love to her: the heavens and earth and all her family were propitious, glowing golden with consent and approval; I thought she was the most wonderful and beautiful thing in life, and her eyes, the intonation of her voice, her hurrying color and a hundred little involuntary signs told me how she quickened at my coming.

But there was a shyness. I loved her as one loves and admires a white flower or a beautiful child—some stranger's child. I felt that I might make her afraid of me. I had never before thought that to make love is a coarse thing. But still at high summer when I met Mary again, no definite thing had been said between myself and Rachel. But we knew, each of us knew, that somewhere in a world less palpable, in fairyland, in dreamland, we had met and made our vows.

V

YOU see how far my imagination had gone towards readjustment when Mary returned into my life. You see how strange and distant it was to meet her again, changed completely into the great lady she had intended to be, speaking to me with the restraint and practised charm of a woman who is young and beautiful and prominent and powerful and secure.

There was no immediate sense of shock in that resumption of our broken intercourse; it seemed to me that night simply that something odd and curious had occurred. From that hour forth Mary by insensible degrees resumed her old predominance in my mind. I woke up in the night and thought about her, and next day I found myself thinking of her, remembering things out of the past and recalling and examining every detail of the overnight encounter. How cold and ineffective we had been, both of us! We had been like people resuming a disused and partially forgotten language. Had she changed towards me? Did she indeed want to see me again, or was that invitation a mere demonstration of how entirely unimportant seeing me or not seeing me had become?

Then I would find myself thinking with the utmost particularity of her face. Had it changed at all?

Was I in love with her still? It seemed to me then that I was not. Here beside me, veiled from me only by our transient embarrassment and the tarnish of separation and silences, was the one person who had ever broken down the crust of shy insincerity which is so incurably my characteristic, and talked intimately of the inmost things of life to me. I discovered now for the first time how intense had been my loneliness for the past five years. I discovered now that through all those years I had been hungry for such talk as Mary alone could give me.

But when at last that talk came it was altogether different from any of those I had invented.

She wrote to me when she came down

into Surrey and I walked over to Martens the next afternoon. I found her in her own sitting-room, a beautiful, characteristic apartment with tall French windows hung with blue curtains, a large writing-desk and a great litter of books. The room gave upon a broad, sunlit terrace with a balustrading of yellowish stone, on which there stood great oleanders. Beyond was a flower garden and then the dark shadows of cypresses. She was standing as I came in to her, as though she had seen me coming across the lawns and had been awaiting my entrance.

"I thought you might come to-day," she said, and told the man-servant to deny her to other callers.

Again she produced that queer effect of being at once altogether the same and altogether different from the Mary I had known. "Justin," she said, "is in Paris. He comes back on Friday."

I then saw that the change lay in her bearing, that for the easy confidence of the girl she had now the deliberate dignity and control of a married woman—a very splendidly and spaciouly married woman. Her manner had been purged of impulse. Since we had met she had stood, the mistress of great houses, and had dealt with thousands of people.

"You walked over to me?"

"I walked," I said. "It is nearly a straight path. You know it?"

"You came over the heather beyond our pine wood," she confirmed. And then we talked some polite unrealities about Surrey scenery and the weather. It was so formal that by a common impulse we let the topic suddenly die. We stood through a pause, a hesitation. Were we indeed to go on at that altitude of cold civility? She turned to the window as if the view was to serve again.

"Sit down," she said and dropped into a chair against the light, looking away from me across the wide green space of afternoon sunshine. I sat down on a little sofa, at a loss also.

"And so," she said, turning her face to me suddenly, "you come back into my life." And I was amazed to see that

the brightness of her eyes was tears. "We've lived—five years."

"You," I said clumsily, "have done all sorts of things. I hear of you—patronizing young artists—organizing experiments in village education."

"Yes," she said, "I've done all sorts of things. One has to. Forced, unreal things for the most part. You, I expect, have done—all sorts of things also.... But yours have been real things...."

"All things," I remarked sententiously, "are real. And all of them a little unreal. South Africa has been wonderful. And now it is all over, one doubts if it really happened. Like that incredulous mood after a storm of passion."

"You've come back for good?"

"For good. I want to do things in England."

"Politics?"

"If I can get into that."

Again a pause. There came the characteristic moment of deliberation that I remembered so well.

"I never meant you," she said, "to go away.... You could have written. You never answered the notes I sent."

"I was frantic," I said, "with loss and jealousy. I wanted to forget."

"And you forgot?"

"I did my best."

"I did my best," said Mary. "And now—Have you forgotten?"

"Nothing."

"Nor I. I thought I had. Until I saw you again. I've thought of you endlessly. I've wanted to talk to you. We had a way of talking together. But you went away. You turned your back as though all that was nothing—not worth having. You—you drove home my marriage, Stephen. You made me know what a thing of sex a woman is to a man—and how little else...."

She paused.

"You see," I said slowly, "you had made me, as people say, in love with you.... I don't know—if you remember everything...."

She looked me in the eyes for a moment.

"I hadn't been fair," she said with an abrupt abandonment of accusation.

"But you know, Stephen, that night—I meant to explain. And afterwards. . . . Things sometimes go as one hasn't expected them to go, even the things one has planned to say. I suppose—I treated you—disgustingly."

I protested.

"Yes," she said, "I treated you as I did—and I thought you would stand it. I *knew*, I knew then as well as you do now, that male to my female you wouldn't stand it, but somehow—I thought there were other things. Things that could override that. . . ."

"Not," I said, "for a boy of one-and-twenty."

"But a man of twenty-six?"

I weighed the question.

"Things are different," I said. And then, "Yes. Anyhow now,—if I may come back penitent,—to a friendship."

We looked at one another gravely. Faintly in our ears sounded the music of past and distant things. We pretended to hear nothing of that, tried honestly to hear nothing of it. I had not remembered how steadfast and quiet her face could be. "Yes," she said, "a friendship."

"I've always had you in my mind, Stephen," she said. "When I saw I couldn't marry you, it seemed to me I had better marry and be free of any further hope. I thought we could get over that. 'Let's get it over,' I thought. Now—we have got over that."

Her eyes verified her words a little doubtfully. "And we can talk and you can tell me of your life, and the things you want to do that make life worth living. Oh! life has been *stupid* without you, Stephen; large and expansive and aimless. . . . Tell me of your politics. Justin told me you think of Parliament."

"I want to do that. I have been thinking— In fact I am going to stand."

"Old Stephen!" she cried with the note of a mother. "They will worry you in politics."

I laughed. "Perhaps I'm not altogether so simple."

"Oh! you'll get through. You have a way of going on. But I shall have to watch over you. I see I shall have to watch over you. Tell me of the things you mean to do. Where are you standing?"

I told her a little disjointedly of the probabilities of my Yorkshire constituency. . . .

I have a vivid vignette in my memory of my return to my father's house, down through the pine woods and by the winding path across the deep valley that separated our two ridges. I was thinking of Mary and nothing but Mary in all the world, and of the friendly sweetness of her eyes and the clean, strong sharpness of her voice. That sweet white figure of Rachel that had been creeping to an ascendancy in my imagination was moonlight to her sunrise. I knew it was Mary I loved and had always loved. I wanted passionately to be as she desired, the friend she demanded, that intimate brother and confederate, but all my heart cried out for her, cried out for her altogether.

I would be her friend, I repeated to myself, I would be her friend. I would talk to her often, plan with her, work with her. I could put my meanings into her life and she should throw her beauty over mine. I began already to dream of the talk of to-morrow's meeting. . . .

And now let me go on to tell at once the thing that changed life for both of us altogether. Within a few weeks of our second meeting, Mary and I were passionately in love with one another. The arrested attractions of our former love, released again, drew us inevitably. We tried to seem outwardly only friends, with this hot glow between us. Our tormented secret was half discovered and half betrayed itself. There followed a tragi-comedy of hesitations and disunited struggle. Within four months the crisis of our two lives was past. . . .

The next installment of "The Passionate Friends" will appear in the October Red Book, on the news-stands September 23rd.



A Change of Beer

By Clifford S. Raymond

Author of "His Apostolic Reputation," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. J. MOWAT

WITH the population of our great cities multiplying at an astounding rate, there is no subject so big, from a writing standpoint, as that of life in the congested centers. And for such a subject, there is no writer so well equipped as Clifford Raymond. He has demonstrated in his keen stories of legislative practices an ability to look below the surface and present what is revealed, with a touch which makes you remember. This is the first of several stories of city life. It might apply to New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, or any other big city, for it is, in reality, a cross-section from life as it is lived after the lights are glowing in the streets which most of us avoid.

MR. RUDOLPH FREYLINGS was a person of jubilant joviality and triumphant optimism justified by fact. Mr. Freylings' world was a singing world. As a popular undertaker he had become a popular politician, and as a popular politician a deputy coroner. He was fitted to sing: "O Death, where is thy sting!" Mr. Freylings could hardly remember the time when death had not seemed to him a beneficent adjustment of na-

ture which brought profit to such as met it professionally with the tools of their craft and a purge to such as met it with the tears of their grief.

Even in his non-political days, Mr. Freylings was a man who observed the order of things and found it good. Hence his jubilant joviality and his triumphant optimism. He was of enormous vitality, as one must be who professionally suggests by his presence the stability of life and the certainty of

eternity to those who have but learned the fragility of the one and have come to consider the dubiety of the other.

In the presence of the Reaper, Mr. Freylings had stood as a Gibraltar of assertive, enduring human fact, and the weak and distracted leaned upon him.

This wonderful vitality, which went through the clasp of a hand to the sentient being meeting the jovial Freylings, had made the jovial one a man of power in his precinct, then in his ward and finally in conventions. He gave over the active management of his business as embalmer and undertaker to a partner, and became a deputy coroner.

Politically it was hardly commensurate with Mr. Freylings' demonstrated political ability, but the post of coroner was a bit beyond even that, and Mr. Freylings' instinct, both personal and political, was mortuary. Therefore, not being able to be coroner, he willingly was deputy. The perceptions of the Philistines are acute, and Mr. Freylings rapidly earned a name both alliterative and astute, being known as First Search Freylings, which was enigma except to the well-informed.

Mr. Freylings, going to work on the morning we are now considering, stopped off half-way down town and went to the Blue Owl, dance hall, saloon, restaurant and, to the knowledge of all who sought to know except the police, gambling house.

The Blue Owl was in a sequestered district into which so clean a thing as daylight seldom came. In this district it merely ceased to be dark, which meant that electric lights were put out, that tired musicians came out of many places carrying their instruments in cases, that cabs until then remaining at the curb carried away the unsteady, disordered remnants of the night, and that comparatively respectable looking colored porters came forth with buckets and with brushes and washed the windows.

Mr. Freylings' residence lay to the south of this sequestered and segregated district and when occasion required, as was frequent, he was telephoned from the office to drop off on his way down town and attend to a little case.

Whenever Mr. Freylings was needed in this district he went with a willingness not altogether born of a desire to perform his duty scrupulously. The necessity of such performance carried Mr. Freylings through many a wasted hour. His interest in the Blue Owl district always was more lively.

Queer deaths were found there. Mr. Freylings had known of as much as five hundred dollars in jewels to come off what seemed an outcast, who, from outward appearance, would have been at a loss for his breakfast if he had lived to need it. Mr. Freylings had known. One or two others had merely suspected.

Things happened unexpectedly. There had been a diamond ring on a chain around the neck of a woman who had shot herself because the orchestra played "A Little Empty Slipper." She had pleaded with the waiters to have the tune abandoned, but her pleas affected her companions humorously and at their insistent request the orchestra persisted.

Mr. Freylings had learned never to judge by clothes. Once or twice he had found every evidence of respectability and only a check book, some small change, a scandal, a horrified family and startled friends. Then he would find, on other occasions, twenty, thirty or fifty dollars, and no evidence of respectability, no scandal, no family, no friends, no tragedy and no grief—only death and, say, twenty dollars.

Mr. Freylings went to the Blue Owl. At the entrance stood a half-dozen men who either had been to bed and had arisen or who had no purpose of going, awaiting the event of Mr. Freylings' arrival.

"Howdy, men, howdy," said Mr. Freylings cheerfully and passed briskly within.

The hallway had a red carpet and a few potted palms and endeavored to smirk with an Oriental lasciviousness, but succeeded merely in presenting a red carpet and a few potted palms. Ticket and cloak room windows gave it a business aspect—the gay life for a quarter fee. A policeman stood by one of the palms with his thumbs in his belt.

"Where's the trouble?" Mr. Freylings

asked cheerfully. "Where's the trouble?"

"In the dance hall," said the policeman.

"The dance of death, hey?" Mr. Freylings suggested humorously. "Where's Lewinsohn?"

"At the bar, I think."

"For a copper," said Mr. Freylings, "you're an intellectual giant."

He went into the bar-room and found Mr. Lewinsohn, the proprietor of the Blue Owl, with a cab driver, a policeman and three men in masquerade costume, all drinking.

Mr. Lewinsohn smiled cheerfully and Mr. Freylings entered cheerfully.

"Another one," said Mr. Freylings, banteringly. "What are you running here, Sol, anyway? A morgue? You do have the durndest luck. What's the matter? Can't a guy get despondent without coming down here and blowing himself out of a cannon? What's the matter with you, Sol? Why don't you cheer your folks up, hey?"

The bar-room had been forlorn until Mr. Freylings entered it. Now good humor and amiability pervaded it.

"Nothing touched, Ruddy," said Mr. Lewinsohn. "We tidied up a bit. That's all."

"Know the gent?" Mr. Freylings asked.

"Never saw him before."

"Pure malice on his part, hey, Sol? You do have the doggondest luck. All the folks that come to your place, Sol, seem to get either homicidal or suicidal. There's something wrong with your beer. I've been telling you that for some time. It's about time you listened to my talk. You're carrying the wrong brand, Sol, and if you have a few more suicides or murders down here I'll be able to convince you."

Mr. Freylings remained good-natured, but there was a suggestion of serious intent in his comment, which Mr. Lewinsohn accepted gravely.

"I'll talk to you about that after while, Ruddy," he said. "I aint tied up to this beer. I don't have to handle it."

"I've got a friend you'd better talk to then," said Mr. Freylings. "He'll sell you a good beer and you might keep

out of trouble on these suicides. What kind of a gent was this that's cashed in?"

"Western person, evidently. Looks like a cattle man."

"Durndest thing how cattlemen get into trouble after they've sold their stock. Never heard of anything happening to one until he had. Are these gentlemen the jury?"

"Yes; I asked them to stick around for a while."

"Give them a drink while I look at the corpse. I'll be ready for you in a minute."

Mr. Freylings went into the dance hall and closed the door. The gentleman who had chosen to shoot himself in the Blue Owl bar-room lay on the floor. A broad rimmed felt hat was beside him, indicating, if the fact were worth noticing, that he had come safely by the cloak-room harpies when he entered the hall.

Mr. Freylings observed that his man was about fifty years of age or thereabouts; and then with an unperturbed and accustomed celerity he went through the pockets of the corpse, drawing forth papers, a wallet, a handful of silver coin and some bills.

From the wallet he took a number of bank notes, indicated by a hasty count to approximate four hundred dollars. His joviality, finding itself so justified by the accidents of life, increased. He put the bills in his pocket and returned the wallet, the silver coin and the loose bills to the dead man's pockets.

In the dead man's necktie there was a pin set with a small diamond. Mr. Freylings glanced at it. The diamond was very small. The pin was left in the dead man's tie as a rebuke to the unjust suspicions which had given Mr. Freylings the name of First Search.

All this had occupied about five minutes.

Mr. Freylings opened the door and called out:

"Bring in your jury, Sol."

Mr. Lewinsohn came with the three men in masquerade clothing, the cab driver and the two policemen.

"You officers take an inventory of

that man's effects," said Mr. Freylings, "and the rest of you draw up chairs. Get me a table if you can, one of you. Officer, see if you can find anything to disclose that man's identity. You fellows and you, Sol, consider yourselves sworn. Hold up your right hands. So help you God. Any one of you know him?"

"I drove him a couple of times," said the cab driver.

to give it to me and the bit for a tip he'd have given me if he'd been sober enough to have thought of it. I'm honest. You can't hang any of that stuff on me. The judge didn't hold me. I drove that fellow away from this place. If his money was gone, the judge knew where to look for it. I drove him from this place, I tell you. I guess the judge didn't care to go into the matter any further. Friend of Lewinsohn. I drove



"You officers take an inventory of that man's effects."

"Oh, you did, did you?" said Mr. Freylings as if the cab driver had become a person justly to be held under suspicion. "What's your name?"

"Sid Gubbins," said the cab driver.

"Wasn't there a man named Gubbins in court last week on the charge of robbing a fare?" Mr. Freylings asked.

The cab driver instantly became bellicose.

"What if there was?" he asked. "The judge didn't hold me, did he? That's the answer. I never put my hands in a man's pockets in my life, except to take my fare when he was too drunk

that fare away from here. That's the answer."

"If you make that line of talk," said Mr. Lewinsohn, "I can tell you, you won't be driving anybody anywhere. I'll get your license. What do you mean by 'I drove him away from here?'"

"Never mind, never mind," said Mr. Freylings. "Cut it out. I only wanted to identify Gubbins. If he's been in court, that's his business. If the judge didn't hold him, that's the judge's business. Our business is with this chap here."

"Well, about this fellow," Mr. Gubbins continued.

"Never you mind," said Mr. Freylings. "Let some one else talk a bit. Who is the dead man, anyway?"

"Looks like his name was Abner P. Metcalf," said one of the policemen. "There are two or three addresses in Iowa and Nebraska on letters addressed to him. Can't tell for certain which is his home."

"Abner P. Metcalf," said Mr. Freylings, entering it of record. "Residence unknown. Now what happened?"

"I don't know," said Mr. Lewinsohn. "There was one of the regular mask

"Nothing," said two of them promptly.

"I saw him," said the third. "I noticed him because of his big hat."

"We'll make you a witness," said Mr. Freylings. "What's your name?"

"Coke Coburn," said Mr. Lewinsohn with an ugly laugh.

"I'd have guessed it," said Mr. Freylings. "Well, Coke, go on. What do you know?"

Coburn's pasty face showed a mere flash of resentment, but his answer took no notice of the gibes.



"I was in the bar when I heard a shot."

dances. I was in the bar when I heard a shot. He was on the floor, dead. His gun was on the table."

"What did he want to shoot himself for?" Mr. Freylings asked.

"I don't know. He didn't confide in me. He'd been crazy drunk earlier in the evening. One of the girls told me he'd been whining about a mortgage when he was maudlin."

"Despondent," said Mr. Freylings. He turned to the three men in costume. "Do you fellows know anything about it?"

"I noticed him," he said. "That's all. He was drunk and loud at first. Then he got quiet. He sat at a table all evening, part of the time with one of the girls. Once Lewinsohn went across the floor between dances and the fellow drew a gun. I saw it. The girl was with him and she put her hand on his arm and looked scared."

"Who was the girl?" Mr. Freylings asked.

"I don't know," said Coburn. "I've seen her before, but I didn't know who she was. She was so scared that she

started to jump away from the table, and he put the gun back in his pocket. Lewinsohn got out of the room pretty quick. I thought he'd seen the gun, too."

Mr. Lewinsohn looked steadily at Mr. Coburn, but the pasty faced young man in the dirty masquerade costume was defiant.

"Anything else?" Mr. Freylings asked carelessly.

"Not much," said Coburn. "Ten minutes before I heard the shot, Pink Smith went over to the table and sat down with the man. The girl got up and left."

"That's a lie," said Mr. Lewinsohn. "Smith was not here last night."

"Who is Pink Smith?" Mr. Freylings asked.

"One of my employees."

"One of his bouncers," said Coburn. "He went and sat down beside the man."

Coburn repeated this statement without emphasis, as if he had not heard or cared nothing for Lewinsohn's denial.

"They had a quarrel, but I couldn't hear what was said. It looked like Pink was trying to pick a quarrel. I was at the other side of the room when the shot was fired."

"Was Pink Smith here last night?" Mr. Freylings asked of the other two men in masque.

"No," they said together.

"When he's here, he's at the door taking tickets," one added. "He wasn't here."

"Well, that's all, isn't it?" Mr. Freylings asked.

"Are you going to let me talk?" Mr. Gubbins, the cab driver, demanded.

"You again," said Mr. Freylings good-naturedly. "Well, fire away."

"I drove this man three times," said Gubbins. "He came out of the Palace Hotel night before last and walked down to my stand. He said he wanted to run around town and see the sights. I brought him down here. I waited for him until morning, and when he came out he was drunk but mad. He told me to drive him to a police station and I took him over to the Third Precinct

and followed him in to see what he wanted. He wanted a warrant against Lewinsohn. Said he had been touched up for two thousand dollars down at the Blue Owl. Said Lewinsohn frisked him while he was buying drinks at the bar. Said he'd sold some cattle and had the money with him. Said Lewinsohn had got all but four hundred dollars and some small bills and silver. Then he came back here with a couple of policemen, but they couldn't find Lewinsohn and the coppers said they'd get him some time during the day."

"Where were you all this time?" Mr. Freylings asked.

"I was driving him, I tell you," said Gubbins. "He went back to the Palace, and I didn't see him again until evening, when I drove him over to the Third Precinct and he found out that they hadn't served the warrant. Then he cussed the police out for a lot of crooks, and the sergeant told him to beat it or they'd throw him down stairs and lock him up. They said they'd get Lewinsohn when they could and they didn't need any advice. Then he had me take him back to the Blue Owl. Said he'd stick around and see why the police wouldn't arrest a crooked, thieving dive-keeper. Said he'd find out and make a holler the next day that would put the city wise to what was going on. He told me to wait, and I waited; and now I want to know where's my money coming from. Where do I get my fare for last night?"

"From the estate, I guess," said Mr. Freylings jovially.

"How much was it?" Mr. Lewinsohn asked.

"Twenty dollars," said Mr. Gubbins.

"Come back to earth," Mr. Lewinsohn advised truculently. "Here's ten dollars. Now what other kick have you?"

"That's all, far as I'm concerned," said Mr. Gubbins cheerfully.

"How about the warrant, Sol?" Mr. Freylings asked. "Heard anything of it?"

"Not a thing."

"Well, he swore it out," said Mr. Gubbins.

"I have it," said one of the policemen. "I've been waiting until we got this off our hands to serve it."

"That's funny," said Mr. Freylings. "The complaining witness is dead. He's committed suicide. No use serving that warrant now. You waited too long. Why didn't you serve it when the man was alive?"

Mr. Freylings looked at Mr. Lewinsohn critically.

"You'd better go over to the station some time to-day, Sol, and see what they're going to do about that."

"I'll take care of it," said Mr. Lewinsohn. The policeman put the warrant back in his pocket.

"Now I'll draw up a little verdict," said Mr. Freylings, "and then we're done. Suicide while despondent. How'll that do, members of the jury? If it's all right, you fellows sign this piece of paper down here at the bottom and I'll fill in the verdict in proper form when I get to the office."

Mr. Lewinsohn signed. Mr. Gubbins signed with as much alacrity as a painful handling of the pen would permit. The two masqueraders who had known nothing signed. Mr. Freylings handed

the pen to Mr. Coburn. The pasty face showed a flash of resolution, but that died away. Mr. Coburn signed. Mr. Lewinsohn was looking at him steadily.

"Now, officers," said Mr. Freylings, "everything is ship-shape and you may call the wagon. Citizens, I wish to thank you for your services. Officers, tell the lieutenant to try and locate that man's folks. I guess we're all done. I'll be glad to buy a drink now."

Later, in a jovial but private conversation, Mr. Freylings suggested to Mr. Lewinsohn:


"Sol, I'm persuaded you need a change of beer. Your stuff causes you too much trouble, or it's likely to. How about it? I've got a sign that would just about fit the place. How about it?"

"Send it down. I guess your beer's good."

"It's good enough to keep folks from committing murder after they drink it, anyway. What's the matter with Coburn?"

"He thinks he lost twenty dollars here last week. Coburn isn't going to be as healthy as he might be."

"He'd better consult Christian Science," said Mr. Freylings cheerfully.





A Son of Kazan

By James Oliver Curwood

Author of "Flower of the North," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK B. HOFFMAN



JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD is so much an expert on the wild life of the Northland—his writings are so accurate—that he is delegated by the Canadian government for researches. His stories have the ring of *reality*, because they are *real*. And nothing he has written compares with his tales of Kazan, the quarter-strain wolf-dog, and Gray Wolf, his wild, blind mate. In this story, Mr. Curwood shows that environment and training are as big a factor in the development of a wild pup as they are in the life of a human baby. It's a bully story.

KAZAN, the wolf dog, was to remember three things above all others. He could never quite forget his old days in the sledge traces, though they were growing shadowy and indistinct in his memory as the summers and the winters passed. Like a dream there came to him a memory of the time he had gone down to civilization. Like dreams were the visions that rose before him now and then of the face of the First Woman, and of the faces of masters who—to him—had lived ages ago. And never would he quite forget the Fire, and his fights with man and beast, and his long chases in the moonlight.

But two things were always with him, as if they had been but yesterday—rising clear and unforgettable above all

others, like the two stars in the north that never lost their brilliance. One was Woman. The other was a terrible fight one night on the top of the Sun Rock, when a lynx had blinded forever his wild mate, Gray Wolf.

Certain events remain indelibly fixed in the minds of men; and so, in a not very different way, they remain in the minds of beasts. It takes neither brain nor reason to measure the depths of sorrow or of happiness. And Kazan, in his unreasoning way, knew that contentment and peace, a full stomach, and caresses and kind words instead of blows had come to him through Woman, and that comradeship in the wilderness—faith, loyalty and devotion—were a part of Gray Wolf. The third unforgettable thing was about to transpire in the home

he and Gray Wolf had found for themselves under a swamp windfall during the days of cold and famine.

They had left the swamp over a month before, when it was smothered deep in snow. On the day they returned to it the sun was shining warmly in the first glorious days of spring warmth. Everywhere, big and small, there were the rushing torrents of melting snows, and the crackle of crumbling ice, the dying frost-cries of rock and earth and tree, and each night for many nights past, the cold, pale glow of the Aurora Borealis had crept farther and farther toward the Pole in fading glory.

Thus early the poplar buds had begun to swell, and the air was filled with the sweet odor of balsam, spruce and cedar. Where there had been famine and death and stillness six weeks before, Kazan and Gray Wolf now stood in the edge of the swamp and breathed the earthy smells of spring, and listened to the sounds of life.

Over their heads a pair of newly mated moose-birds fluttered and scolded at them. A big jay sat pluming himself in the sunshine. Farther in they heard the crack of a stick broken under a heavy hoof. From the ridge behind them they caught the raw scent of a mother bear, busy pulling down the tender poplar buds for her six-weeks-old cubs, born while she was still deep in her winter sleep.

In the warmth of the sun and the sweetness of the air, there breathed to Gray Wolf the mystery of matehood and of motherhood. She whined softly, and rubbed her blind face against Kazan. For days, in her way, she had tried to tell him. More than ever she wanted to curl herself up in that warm, dry nest under the windfall. She had no desire to hunt. The crack of the dry stick under a cloven hoof and the warm scent of the she-bear and her cubs roused none of the old instincts in her. She wanted to curl herself up in the old windfall—and wait. And she tried hard

to make Kazan understand her desire.

Now that the snow was gone they found that a narrow creek lay between them and the knoll on which the windfall was situated. Gray Wolf pricked up her ears at the tumult of the little torrent. Since the day of the Fire, when Kazan and she had saved themselves on the sand-bar, she had ceased to have the inherent wolf horror of water. She followed fearlessly, even eagerly, behind Kazan as he sought a place where they could ford the rushing little stream. On the other side Kazan could see the big windfall. Gray Wolf could *smell* it, and she whined joyously, with her blind face turned towards their house.

A hundred yards up the stream a big cedar had fallen over the stream, and Kazan began to cross. For a moment Gray Wolf hesitated, and then followed. Side by side they trotted to the windfall. With their heads and shoulders in the dark opening to their nest, they scented the air long and cautiously. Then they entered.

Kazan heard Gray Wolf as she flung herself down on the dry floor of the snug cavern. She was panting, not from exhaustion, but because she was filled with a sensation of contentment.

In the darkness, Kazan's own jaws fell apart. He too was glad to get back to their old home. He went to Gray Wolf, and she licked his face, panting still harder. It had but one meaning. And Kazan understood. For a moment he lay down beside her, listening, and eyeing the opening to their nest. Then he began to sniff about the log walls.

He was close to the opening when a sudden fresh scent came to him, and he grew rigid, and his bristles stood up. The scent was followed by a whimpering, babyish chatter. A porcupine entered the opening, and proceeded to advance in its foolish fashion, still chattering in that babyish way that has made its life inviolable at the hands of man.

Kazan had heard that sound before,



and like all other beasts had learned to ignore the presence of the creature that made it. But just now he did not stop to consider that what he saw was a porcupine, and that at his first snarl the good-humored little creature would waddle away as fast as it could, still chattering baby talk to itself. His first reasoning was that it was a live thing invading the home to which Gray Wolf and he had just returned. A day later, or perhaps an hour later, he would have driven it back with a growl. Now he leaped upon it.

A wild chattering, intermingled with pig-like squeaks, and then a rising staccato of howls followed the attack. Gray Wolf sprang to the opening. The porcupine was rolled up in a thousand-spiked ball a dozen feet away, and she could hear Kazan tearing about in the throes of the direst agony that can befall a beast of the forests. His face and nose were a mat of porcupine quills.

For a few moments Kazan rolled and dug in the wet mold and earth, pawing madly at the things that pierced his flesh. Then he set off, as all dogs will who have come into contact with the friendly porcupine, and raced again and again around the windfall, howling at every jump.

Gray Wolf took the matter coolly. It is possible that there are moments of humor in the lives of animals. If so, she saw this one. She scented the porcupine, and she knew that Kazan was full of quills. As there was nothing to do and nothing to fight, she sat back on her haunches and waited, pricking up her ears every time Kazan passed her in his mad circuit around the windfall.

At his fourth or fifth heat, the porcupine smoothed itself down a little, and continuing the interrupted thread of its chatter, waddled to a near-by poplar, climbed it, and began to gnaw the tender bark from a limb.

At last Kazan halted before Gray Wolf. The first agony of a hundred little needles piercing his flesh had deadened into a steady burning pain. Gray Wolf went up to him and investigated him cautiously. With her teeth she seized the ends of two or three of the quills

and pulled them out. Kazan was very much dog now. He gave a yelp, and whimpered as Gray Wolf jerked out a second bunch of quills. Then he flattened himself on his belly, stretched out his forelegs, closed his eyes, and without any other sound than an occasional yip of pain, allowed Gray Wolf to go on with the operation.

Fortunately he had escaped getting any of the quills in his mouth and tongue. But his nose and jaws were soon red with blood. For an hour Gray Wolf kept faithfully at her task, and by the end of that time had succeeded in pulling out most of the quills. A few still remained, too short and too deeply imbedded for her to extract with her teeth.

After this, Kazan went down to the creek and buried his burning muzzle in the cold water. This gave him some relief, but only for a short time. The quills that remained worked their way deeper and deeper into his flesh, like living things. Nose and lips began to swell. He drooled blood and saliva at the mouth, and his eyes grew red.

Two hours after Gray Wolf had retired to her nest under the windfall, a quill had completely pierced his lip and began to prick his tongue. In desperation Kazan chewed viciously upon a piece of wood. This broke and crumpled the quill, and destroyed its power to do further harm. Nature had told him the one thing to do to save himself. Most of that day he spent in gnawing at wood and crunching mouthfuls of earth and mold between his jaws. In this way the barb-toothed points of the quills were dulled and broken as they came through. At dusk he crawled under the windfall, and Gray Wolf gently licked his muzzle with her soft, cool tongue. Frequently during the night Kazan went to the creek and found relief in its ice cold water.

The next day he had what the forest people call "porcupine mumps." His face was swollen until Gray Wolf would have laughed if she had been human, and not blind. His chops bulged like cushions. His eyes were mere slits. When he went out into the day he blinked, for he could see scarcely better than his

sightless mate. But the pain was mostly gone.

The night that followed he began to think of hunting, and the next morning, before it was yet dawn, he brought a rabbit into their den. A few hours later he would have brought a spruce partridge to Gray Wolf, but just as he was about to spring upon his feathered prey the soft chatter of a porcupine a few yards away brought him to a sudden stop.

Few things could make Kazan drop his tail. But that inane and incoherent prattle of the little spiked beast sent him off at double-quick with his tail between his legs. As man abhors and evades the creeping serpent, so Kazan would hereafter evade this little creature of the forests that never in animal history has been known to lose its good-humor or to pick a quarrel.

Two weeks of lengthening days, of increasing warmth, of sunshine and hunting, followed Kazan's adventure with the porcupine. The last of the snow went rapidly. Out of the earth began to spring tips of green. The *bakneesh* vine glistened redder each day; the poplar buds began to split; and in the sunniest spots between the rocks of the ridges the little white snow-flowers began to give a final proof that spring had come.

For the first of those two weeks Gray Wolf hunted frequently with Kazan. They did not go far. The swamp was alive with small game, and each day or night they killed fresh meat. After the first week Gray Wolf hunted less. Then came a soft and balmy night, glorious in the radiance of a full spring moon, when she refused to leave the windfall. Kazan did not urge her. Instinct made him understand, and he did not go far from the windfall that night in his hunt. When he returned he brought a rabbit.

From the darkest corner of the windfall Gray Wolf warned him back with a low snarl. He stood in the opening, the rabbit between his jaws. He took no offense at the snarl, but stood for a moment gazing into the gloom where Gray Wolf had hidden herself. Then he dropped the rabbit and lay down, squarely in the opening.

After a little he rose restlessly and went outside. But he did not leave the windfall. It was day when he reentered. He sniffed, as he had sniffed once before a long time ago, between the rocks at the top of the Sun Rock. That which was in the air was no longer a mystery to him. He came nearer, and Gray Wolf did not snarl. She whined coaxingly as he touched her. Then his muzzle found something else. It was soft, and warm, and made a queer little sniffing sound. There was a responsive whine in Kazan's throat, and in the darkness came the quick, soft caress of Gray Wolf's tongue.

Kazan returned to the sunshine, and stretched himself out before the door of the windfall. His jaws dropped open, for he was filled with a strange contentment.

II

Robbed once of the joys of parenthood by the murder on the Sun Rock, both Gray Wolf and Kazan were different than they would have been had the big gray lynx not come into their lives at that time. As if it were but yesterday, they remembered the moonlit night when the lynx brought blindness to Gray Wolf, and destroyed her young, and when Kazan had avenged himself and his mate in his terrible fight to the death with their enemy. And now, with that soft little handful of life snuggling close up against her, Gray Wolf saw through her blind eyes the tragic picture of that night more vividly than ever, and she quivered at every sound, ready to leap in the face of an unseen foe, to rend all flesh that was not the flesh of Kazan.

And ceaselessly, the slightest sound bringing him to his feet, Kazan watched and guarded. He mistrusted the moving shadows. The snapping of a twig drew back his upper lip. His fangs gleamed menacingly when the soft air brought a strange scent. In him, too, the memory of the Sun Rock, the death of their first young, and the blinding of Gray Wolf, had given birth to a new instinct. Not for an instant was he off his guard.

As surely as one expects the sun to rise, so did Kazan expect that sooner or

later their deadly enemy would creep upon them from out of the forest. In another hour such as this the lynx had brought death. The lynx had brought blindness. And so, day and night, he

But peace had spread its wings of sunshine and plenty over the swamp. There were no intruders, unless the noisy whiskey-jacks, the big-eyed moose-birds, the chattering bush sparrows, and the



waited and watched for the lynx to come again. And woe unto any other creature of flesh and blood that dared to approach the windfall in these first days of Gray Wolf's motherhood.

wood-mice and ermine could be called such.

After the first day or two Kazan went more frequently into the windfall, and though more than once he nosed search-



ingly about Gray Wolf, he could find only the one little pup. A little farther west, the Dog-Ribs would have called the pup Ba-ree, for two reasons: because he had no brothers or sisters, and because he was a mixture of dog and wolf. He was a sleek and lively little fellow from the beginning, for there was no division of mother strength and attention. He developed with the true swiftness of the wolf-whelp, and not with the slowness of the dog-pup.

For three days he was satisfied to cuddle close against his mother, feeding when he was hungry, sleeping a great deal, and preened and laundered almost constantly by Gray Wolf's affectionate tongue. From the fourth day he grew busier and more inquisitive with every hour. He found his mother's blind face; with tremendous effort he tumbled over her paws; and once he lost himself completely and sniffled for help when he rolled fifteen or eighteen inches away from her.

It was not long after this that he began to recognize Kazan as a part of his mother, and he was scarcely more than a

week old when he rolled himself up contentedly between Kazan's fore-legs and went to sleep. Kazan was puzzled. Then with a deep sigh Gray Wolf laid her head across one of her mate's fore-legs, with her nose touching her runaway baby, and seemed vastly contented. For half an hour Kazan did not move.

When he was ten days old, Ba-ree discovered there was great sport in tussling with a bit of rabbit fur. It was a little later when he made his second exciting discovery—light and sunshine. The sun had now reached a point where in the middle of the afternoon a bright gleam of it found its way through an overhead opening in the windfall. At first Ba-ree would only stare at the golden streak. Then came the time when he tried to play with it, as he played with the rabbit fur. Each day thereafter he went a little nearer to the opening through which Kazan passed from the windfall into the big world outside.

Finally came the time when Ba-ree reached the opening, and crouched there, blinking and frightened at what he saw, and now Gray Wolf no longer tried to hold him back, but went out into the sunshine and tried to call him to her. It was three days before his weak eyes had grown strong enough to permit him to follow her, and very quickly after that Ba-ree learned to love the sun, the warm air, and the sweetness of life, and to dread the darkness of the closed-in den where he had been born.

That this world was not altogether as nice as it at first appeared, he was very soon to learn. At the darkening signs of an approaching storm, one day, Gray Wolf tried to lure him back under the windfall. It was her first warning to Ba-ree, and he did not understand. Where Gray Wolf failed, Nature came to teach a first lesson.

Ba-ree was caught in a sudden deluge of rain. It flattened him out in pure terror, and he was drenched and half drowned before Gray Wolf caught him between her jaws and carried him into shelter. One by one, after this, the first strange experiences of life came to him, and one by one his instincts received their birth.

Greatest for him of the days to follow was that on which his inquisitive nose touched the raw flesh of a freshly killed and bleeding rabbit. It was his first taste of blood. It was sweet. It filled him with a strange excitement, and thereafter he knew what it meant when Kazan brought in something between his jaws. He soon began to battle with sticks in place of the soft fur, and his teeth grew as hard and as sharp as little needles.

The Great Mystery was bared to him at last when Kazan brought in a big rabbit that was still alive between his jaws, but so badly crushed that it could not run when dropped to the ground. Ba-ree had learned to know what rabbits and partridges meant—the sweet, warm blood that he loved better even than he had ever loved his mother's milk. But they had come to him dead. He had never seen one of the monsters alive. And now the rabbit that Kazan dropped to the ground, kicking and struggling with a broken back, sent Ba-ree back appalled.

For a few moments he wonderingly watched the dying throes of Kazan's prey. Both Kazan and Gray Wolf seemed to understand that this was to be Ba-ree's first lesson in his education as a slaying and flesh-eating creature, and they stood close over the rabbit, making no effort to end its struggles.

Half a dozen times Gray Wolf sniffed at the rabbit, and then turned her blind face toward Ba-ree. After the third or fourth time Kazan stretched himself out on his belly a few feet away and watched the proceedings attentively.

Each time that Gray Wolf lowered her head to muzzle the rabbit, Ba-ree's little ears shot up expectantly. When he saw that nothing happened, and that his mother was not hurt, he came a little

nearer. Soon he could reach out, stiff-legged and cautious, and touch the furry thing that was not yet dead. In a last spasmodic convulsion the big rabbit doubled up its rear legs and gave a kick that sent Ba-ree sprawling back, yipping in terror.

He regained his feet, and then, for the first time, anger and the desire to retaliate took possession of him. The kick had completed his first education. He came back, with less caution, but stiffer legged, and a moment later had dug his tiny teeth in the rabbit's neck. He could feel the throb of life in the soft body; the muscles of the dying rabbit twitched convulsively under him; and he hung with his teeth until there was no longer a tremor of life in his first "kill."

Gray Wolf was delighted. She caressed Ba-ree with her tongue, and even Kazan condescended to sniff approvingly of his son when he returned to the rabbit. And never before had warm, sweet blood tasted as good to Ba-ree as it did to-day.

Swiftly Ba-ree developed from a blood-tasting into a flesh-eating animal. One by one the mysteries of life were unfolded to him—the hideous mating-night chortle of the gray owls, the crashing of a falling tree, the roll of thunder, the rush of running water, the scream of a fisher-cat, the mooring of the cow moose, and the distant call of the wolf. But chief of all these mysteries that were already becoming a part of his instinct was the mystery of scent.

One day he wandered fifty yards away from the windfall, and his little nose touched the warm scent of a rabbit. Instantly, without reasoning or further process of education, he knew that to get at the sweet flesh and blood which he loved he must follow the scent. He wriggled slowly along the trail until he came to a big log, over which the rabbit had vaulted in a long leap, and from this log he turned back.

Each day after this he went on adventures of his own. At first he was like an explorer without a compass in a vast and unknown world. Each day he encountered something new, always won-



ingly about Gray Wolf, he could find only the one little pup. A little farther west, the Dog-Ribs would have called the pup Ba-ree, for two reasons: because he had no brothers or sisters, and because he was a mixture of dog and wolf. He was a sleek and lively little fellow from the beginning, for there was no division of mother strength and attention. He developed with the true swiftness of the wolf-whelp, and not with the slowness of the dog-pup.

For three days he was satisfied to cuddle close against his mother, feeding when he was hungry, sleeping a great deal, and preened and laundered almost constantly by Gray Wolf's affectionate tongue. From the fourth day he grew busier and more inquisitive with every hour. He found his mother's blind face; with tremendous effort he tumbled over her paws; and once he lost himself completely and sniffled for help when he rolled fifteen or eighteen inches away from her.

It was not long after this that he began to recognize Kazan as a part of his mother, and he was scarcely more than a

week old when he rolled himself up contentedly between Kazan's fore-legs and went to sleep. Kazan was puzzled. Then with a deep sigh Gray Wolf laid her head across one of her mate's fore-legs, with her nose touching her runaway baby, and seemed vastly contented. For half an hour Kazan did not move.

When he was ten days old, Ba-ree discovered there was great sport in tussling with a bit of rabbit fur. It was a little later when he made his second exciting discovery—light and sunshine. The sun had now reached a point where in the middle of the afternoon a bright gleam of it found its way through an overhead opening in the windfall. At first Ba-ree would only stare at the golden streak. Then came the time when he tried to play with it, as he played with the rabbit fur. Each day thereafter he went a little nearer to the opening through which Kazan passed from the windfall into the big world outside.

Finally came the time when Ba-ree reached the opening, and crouched there, blinking and frightened at what he saw, and now Gray Wolf no longer tried to hold him back, but went out into the sunshine and tried to call him to her. It was three days before his weak eyes had grown strong enough to permit him to follow her, and very quickly after that Ba-ree learned to love the sun, the warm air, and the sweetness of life, and to dread the darkness of the closed-in den where he had been born.

That this world was not altogether as nice as it at first appeared, he was very soon to learn. At the darkening signs of an approaching storm, one day, Gray Wolf tried to lure him back under the windfall. It was her first warning to Ba-ree, and he did not understand. Where Gray Wolf failed, Nature came to teach a first lesson.

Ba-ree was caught in a sudden deluge of rain. It flattened him out in pure terror, and he was drenched and half drowned before Gray Wolf caught him between her jaws and carried him into shelter. One by one, after this, the first strange experiences of life came to him, and one by one his instincts received their birth.

Greatest for him of the days to follow was that on which his inquisitive nose touched the raw flesh of a freshly killed and bleeding rabbit. It was his first taste of blood. It was sweet. It filled him with a strange excitement, and thereafter he knew what it meant when Kazan brought in something between his jaws. He soon began to battle with sticks in place of the soft fur, and his teeth grew as hard and as sharp as little needles.

The Great Mystery was bared to him at last when Kazan brought in a big rabbit that was still alive between his jaws, but so badly crushed that it could not run when dropped to the ground. Ba-ree had learned to know what rabbits and partridges meant—the sweet, warm blood that he loved better even than he had ever loved his mother's milk. But they had come to him dead. He had never seen one of the monsters alive. And now the rabbit that Kazan dropped to the ground, kicking and struggling with a broken back, sent Ba-ree back appalled.

For a few moments he wonderingly watched the dying throes of Kazan's prey. Both Kazan and Gray Wolf seemed to understand that this was to be Ba-ree's first lesson in his education as a slaying and flesh-eating creature, and they stood close over the rabbit, making no effort to end its struggles.

Half a dozen times Gray Wolf sniffed at the rabbit, and then turned her blind face toward Ba-ree. After the third or fourth time Kazan stretched himself out on his belly a few feet away and watched the proceedings attentively.

Each time that Gray Wolf lowered her head to muzzle the rabbit, Ba-ree's little ears shot up expectantly. When he saw that nothing happened, and that his mother was not hurt, he came a little

nearer. Soon he could reach out, stiff-legged and cautious, and touch the furry thing that was not yet dead. In a last spasmodic convulsion the big rabbit doubled up its rear legs and gave a kick that sent Ba-ree sprawling back, yipping in terror.

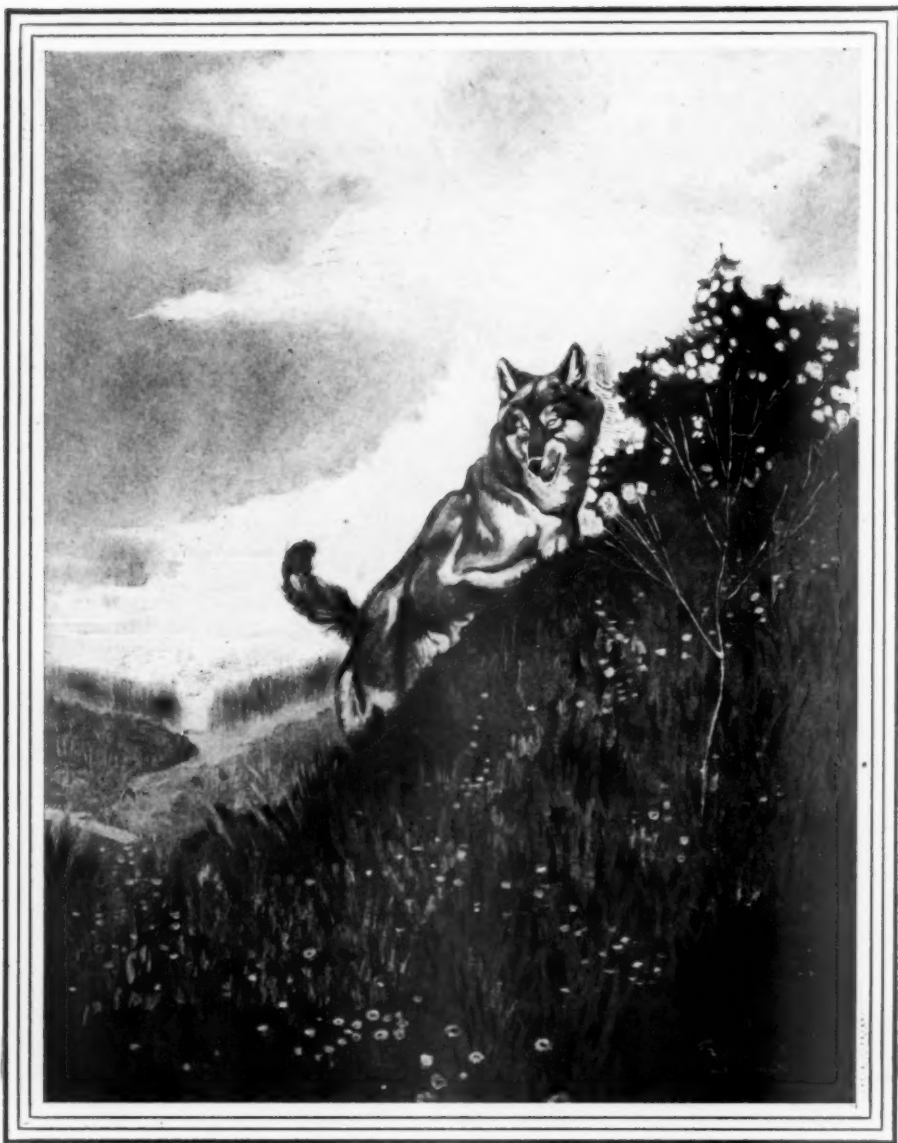
He regained his feet, and then, for the first time, anger and the desire to retaliate took possession of him. The kick had completed his first education. He came back, with less caution, but stiffer legged, and a moment later had dug his tiny teeth in the rabbit's neck. He could feel the throb of life in the soft body; the muscles of the dying rabbit twitched convulsively under him; and he hung with his teeth until there was no longer a tremor of life in his first "kill."

Gray Wolf was delighted. She caressed Ba-ree with her tongue, and even Kazan condescended to sniff approvingly of his son when he returned to the rabbit. And never before had warm, sweet blood tasted as good to Ba-ree as it did to-day.

Swiftly Ba-ree developed from a blood-tasting into a flesh-eating animal. One by one the mysteries of life were unfolded to him—the hideous mating-night chortle of the gray owls, the crashing of a falling tree, the roll of thunder, the rush of running water, the scream of a fisher-cat, the mooing of the cow moose, and the distant call of the wolf. But chief of all these mysteries that were already becoming a part of his instinct was the mystery of scent.

One day he wandered fifty yards away from the windfall, and his little nose touched the warm scent of a rabbit. Instantly, without reasoning or further process of education, he knew that to get at the sweet flesh and blood which he loved he must follow the scent. He wriggled slowly along the trail until he came to a big log, over which the rabbit had vaulted in a long leap, and from this log he turned back.

Each day after this he went on adventures of his own. At first he was like an explorer without a compass in a vast and unknown world. Each day he encountered something new, always won-



derful, frequently terrifying. But his terrors grew less and less, and his confidence correspondingly greater. As he found that none of the things he feared did him any harm, he became more and more bold in his investigations. And his appearance was changing, as well as his view of things.

His round, roly-poly body was taking a different form. He became lithe and quick. The yellow of his coat darkened, and there was a whitish-gray streak along

his back, like that along Kazan's. He had his mother's under-throat, and her beautiful grace of head. Otherwise he was a true son of Kazan. His legs gave signs of future strength and massiveness. He was broad across the chest. His eyes were wide apart, with a little red in the lower corners.

The forest people know what to expect of husky pups who early develop that drop of red. It is a warning that they are born of the wild, and that their

mothers, or fathers, are of the savage hunt-packs. In Ba-ree that tinge of red was so pronounced that it could mean but one thing. While he was almost half dog, the wild had claimed him forever.

Not until the day of his first real battle with a living creature did Ba-ree come fully into his inheritance. He had gone farther than usual from the windfall—fully a hundred yards. Here he found a new wonder. It was the creek. He had heard it before, and he had looked down upon it from afar—from a distance of fifty yards at least. But to-day he dared to go to the edge of it, and there he stood for a long time, with the water rippling and singing at his feet, gazing across it into the new world that he saw.

Then he moved cautiously along the stream. He had not gone a dozen steps when there was a furious fluttering close to him. A whiskey-jack—one of the fierce, big-eyed jays of the northland—was directly in his path. It could not fly. One of its wings dragged, probably broken in a struggle with some one of the smaller preying beasts. But for an instant it was a most startling and defiant bit of life to Ba-ree.

Then the grayish crest along his back stiffened, and he advanced. The whiskey-jack remained motionless until Ba-ree was within three feet of it. In short, quick hops it began to retreat. Instantly Ba-ree's indecision had flown to the four winds. With one sharp, excited yip he flew at the wounded bird. For a few moments there was a thrilling race, and then Ba-ree's sharp little teeth buried themselves in the jay's feathers.

Swift as a flash the bird's beak began to strike. The jay was the king of the smaller birds. In nesting season it killed the brush sparrows, the mild-eyed moose-birds, and the tree-sappers. Again and again it struck Ba-ree with its powerful beak, but the son of Kazan had now reached the age of battle, and the pain of the blow only made his own teeth sink deeper. At last he found the flesh, and a puppyish snarl rose in his throat. Fortunately he had secured a hold under the wing, and after the first dozen blows the jay's resistance grew weaker. Five

minutes later Ba-ree loosened his teeth, and drew back a step to look at the crumpled and motionless creature before him. The jay was dead. He had won his first battle. And with victory came the wonderful dawning of that greatest instinct of all, which told him that no longer was he a drone in the marvelous mechanism of wilderness life—but a part of it from this time forth. *For he had killed.*

Half an hour later Gray Wolf came down over his trail. The jay was torn into bits. Its feathers were scattered about, and Ba-ree's little nose was bloody. Ba-ree was lying in triumph beside his victim. Swiftly Gray Wolf understood, and caressed him joyously. When they returned to the windfall, Ba-ree carried in his jaws what was left of the jay.

From that hour of his first kill, hunting became the chief passion of Ba-ree's life. When he was not sleeping in the sun, or under the windfall at night, he was seeking life that he could destroy. He slaughtered an entire family of wood-mice. Moose-birds were at first the easiest for him to stalk, and he killed three. Then he encountered an ermine, and the fierce little white outlaw of the forests gave him his first defeat. Defeat cooled his ardor for a few days, but taught him the great lesson that there were other fanged and flesh-eating animals beside himself, and that nature had so schemed things that fang must not prey upon fang—for food.

Many things had been born in him. Instinctively he shunned the porcupine without experiencing the torture of its quills. He came face to face with a fisher-cat one day, a fortnight after his fight with the ermine. Both were seeking food, and as there was no food between them to fight over, each went his own way.

Farther and farther Ba-ree ventured from the windfall, always following the creek. Sometimes he was gone for hours. At first Gray Wolf was restless when he was away, but she seldom went with him, and after a time her restlessness left her. Nature was working swiftly. It was Kazan who was restless now. Moonlight



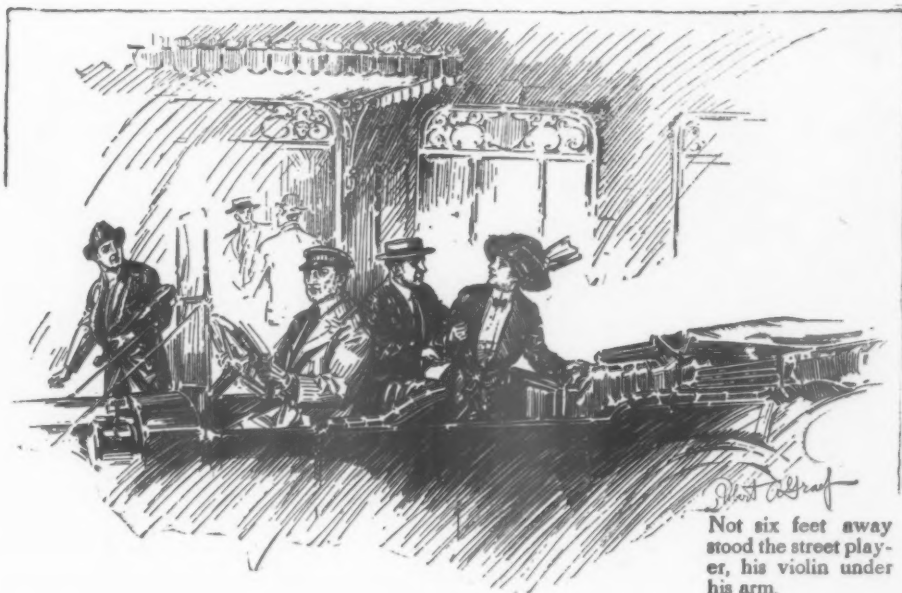
nights had come, and the *Wanderlust* was growing more and more insistent in his veins. And Gray Wolf, too, was filled with the strange longing to roam at large out into the big world.

Came then the afternoon when Ba-ree went on his longest hunt. Half a mile away he killed his first rabbit. He remained beside it until dusk. The moon rose, big and golden, flooding the forests and plains and ridges with a light almost like that of day. It was a glorious night. And Ba-ree faced the moon, and

left his kill. And the direction in which he traveled *was away from the windfall.*

All that night Gray Wolf watched and waited. And when at last the moon was sinking into the south and west she settled back on her haunches, turned her blind face to the sky, and sent forth her first howl since the day Ba-ree was born. Nature had come into her own. Far away, Ba-ree heard, but he did not answer. A new world was his. He had said good-by to the windfall—and home.

"The Feud" is the title of the next of the Kazan stories. It is the most stirring of all the episodes in the life of the wolf-dog. It will be in the October issue.



Not six feet away stood the street player, his violin under his arm.

Dear Knows!

By Alma Martin Estabrook

Author of "The Comrade Heart," etc.

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THIS is the story of a girl who knew how to look out for herself, if, as Mary Gray says, a girl *ever* knows that. It's a romance by a star writer of romance.

THE torpor of summer rested on "The Hare's Foot." Half its patrons had fled from town, and the other half concerned itself in the pursuit of comfort rather than of improved looks. A lethargy of heat and idleness reigned, where ordinarily all was liveliest activity.

Mary Gray, a little paler than when at the beginning of the season she had come to the city to assume charge of the grooming establishment during the absence of her cousin, the proprietress, alternately read and dreamed of a pine

woods she knew; a number of the shop's assistants were away on vacation; Leola, the appointment girl, had fallen into unusual silence as she embroidered a guest towel; Marietta, the little stock girl, moved dully at her task, her hair limp about her flushed face; and even the wax model on the case at Miss Gray's elbow seemed, for all the bravery of her calimine complexion and a new Cleo coil, a bit wilted and weary.

Upon this scene of unaccustomed dullness there entered a tall, trim, cool-eyed, crisp-voiced young woman in a black

skirt and a fresh white waist, with a masculine collar and little black tie; dropping into a chair, she exclaimed:

"Have you seen the man at the corner? He's a common wandering musician, I suppose, but he's playing *divinely*!"

Mary Gray came around and sat down in one of the big green wicker chairs. She hadn't heard him, she said. Surely he couldn't have been playing there often.

"Never before to-day!" the other girl said. "I don't know when I've been so completely carried away! I found myself standing stock-still listening as if I'd never heard a note of music in my life. I'd have been there still if he hadn't looked at me and smiled the queerest sort of smile at my absorption. Mercy, isn't it hot?" She leaned back and fanned with the fashion sheet she had picked up in one of the stores. Then she settled more securely the smart little black hat on her splendidly carried head.

She was older than Mary Gray, this girl with the emphatic mannerisms and dark, clear-cut beauty. Her steady eyes reflected all that the other girl's eyes had not begun to mirror. Wisdom had touched her, wisdom, the wind from the sea of experience that, blowing steadily day after day and year after year, beats ever against the cheeks of the women who breast it.

For eight years Celia Abbott had fronted the accidents of life that had made her a cash girl, then an employee in a telephone exchange, and now an operator in the hotel next door. Men called her "square," and "a brick," and were a little afraid of her. So also were certain very young and frivolous girls; but older ones—alone and fighting her kind of fight—sought her eagerly and held to her, as if they trusted their own strength less than hers.

"It's a face to haunt you," she pursued. "A regular dreamer's face—"

"I seen him. He's got the fatal gift all right!" observed Leola, without looking up from the monogram through the intricacies of which it seemed impossible to believe she could ever work her way.

"What nonsense!" snapped Celia Abbott, and turned back to Mary. "You've seen faces like it—not handsome, not ugly, but different, with something in it that makes it stand out from all the other faces about it. I can't for the life of me see why he should be playing a violin on a street corner!"

"Notice the shekels he was rakin' in?" inquired Leola. "He makes it pay better than vaudeville, I'll bet."

Curiously annoyed, Celia Abbott flushed vividly and ceased to speak of the man. After a few minutes she said she must go, and Mary went as far as the reception room with her.

"I'm going to Hollywood for dinner with Arthur Broome to-night," Celia said, carelessly. "You don't approve, do you?"

Frank perplexity puckered the strong brows above Mary Gray's eyes—eyes that were like shining blue-gray water beneath a summer sun.

Only recently come upon the highway of life, she found herself still bewildered by all that went on about her, still vainly trying to decide between glamour and glare, between harmony and discord, between what was desirable and what was merely the accepted order of things.

"How will—it end?" she asked, reluctantly.

"You mean that he's out of my class?"

"Isn't he?"

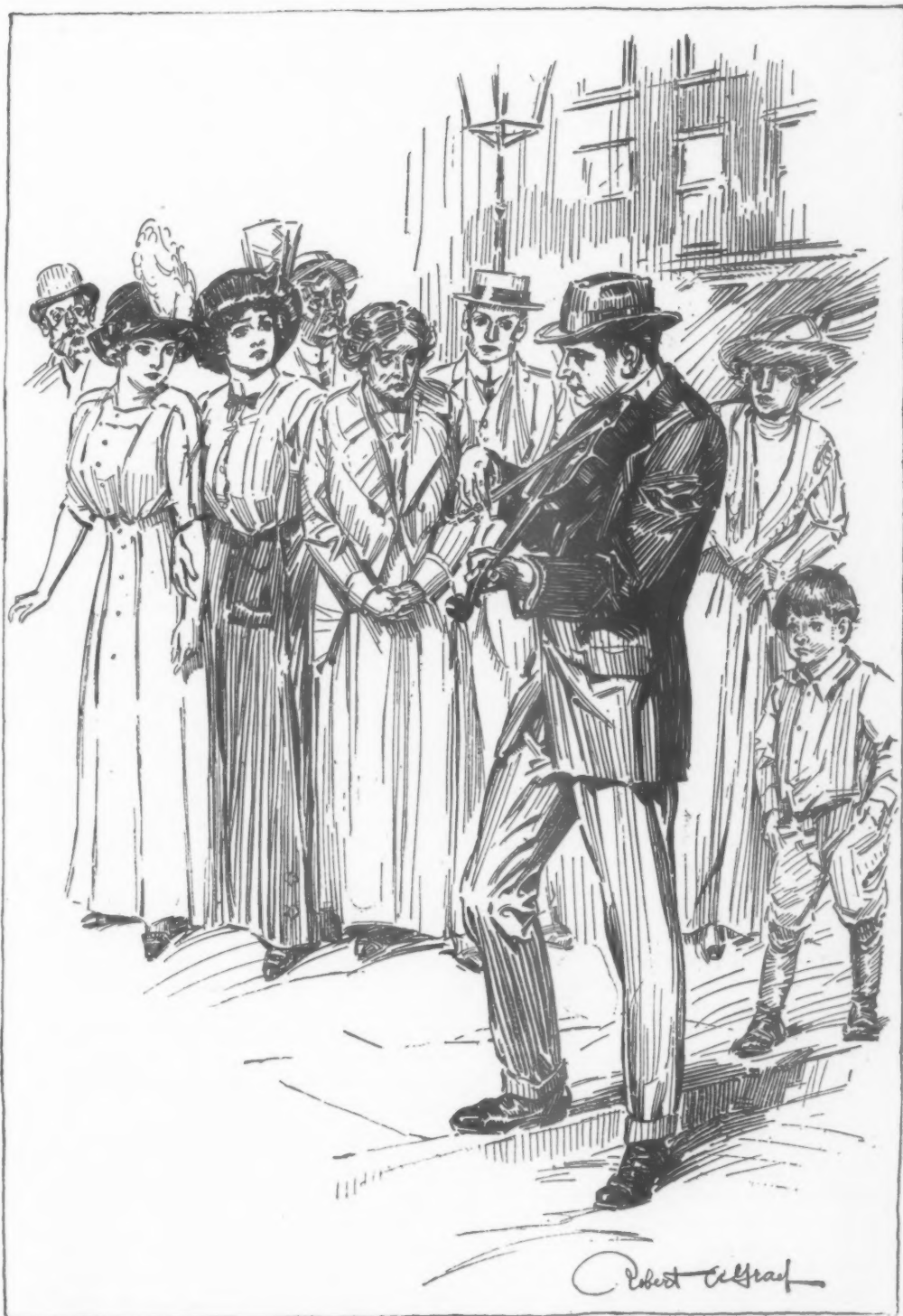
"Heavens, yes! There isn't a society girl in town who wouldn't be glad. —Silly! Don't you think I know how to take care of myself?"

"I'm wondering if a girl ever knows," Mary murmured, hesitantly.

"Of course she doesn't, if everything is against her! If she has lost her job, for instance, and owes rent and a lot of things beside, and is actually hungry and cold—cold to the marrow of her soul, and cares for the man besides. But I haven't lost my job, you see, and I *don't* care, and I'm not likely to let myself. Well, what are you thinking?"

"I'm thinking that men *let* themselves care, and women just *care*, don't they?"

"Not women like me! I'm not made of that kind of stuff. Sometimes it fright-



"A Brahms dance from the gutter!" whispered Celia. At the moment the player discovered her there, wedged in among the crowd, and at his look of recognition she pressed forward, drawing Mary with her

ens me to feel myself so different from most girls. Then other times I'm thankful enough for it."

She stood in the shaft of light that fell through the partially drawn curtains, absently turning the leaves of the fashion sheet.

"I used to think it was because I'd always known so much," she mused, "but it's not that. It's a kind of temperamental indifference, I guess. I'm always seeing women I like, and girls, and children, and boys,—kids, sixteen and eighteen, you know—but men! Don't you worry on that score!" She closed the fashion sheet and moved toward the little gate of the reception room. Nearing it, she wheeled suddenly and came back. "I can't get that man down there in the street off my mind," she exclaimed, frowning as if the recollection annoyed her.

"Poor fellow," said Mary Gray.

"He's like a child lost in a big store—with its nurse just around the aisle. Success is just around the aisle for him, if he only had somebody to lead him to it."

"They're so queer, sometimes—those musicians," suggested Mary.

"He isn't queer. You'd see in a minute that he isn't. That's what makes it seem so strange—his playing there."

She stood for an instant, clasping and unclasping her mesh bag. As she did so, she seemed to cast off a scruple and come to a decision.

"They'd give him a chance at The Criterion, I'm sure. I know the manager. I'm going down there and tell him to apply. I could steer the thing through, if he'd say he'd go."

"You don't know anything about him—"

"I don't need to know! Haven't I heard him play?"

"He's probably like a stray collie," objected Mary. "He'd lick any friendly hand that stretched out to him, then sneak off the next day."

"I've given you the wrong idea of him. He's not that kind at all. I'd stake my word on it. Get on your hat and come and see him for yourself."

She whisked out her watch.

"I've still half an hour before I must get back to work. I didn't want much lunch, so I wasn't ten minutes at it. Come on. I'm crazy to know what you think of him."

Mary Gray smiled irresolutely. Afterward, she wondered if a sudden prescience had been upon her—a vague, altogether unformulated fear of what might happen.

"You're sure you ought to meddle?" she questioned.

"I don't call it meddling," flashed Celia. "I hope he won't either. Hurry, if you're coming along."

He was standing at the corner in the full sweep of sunlight, a man of twenty-nine or thirty, his strong body surmounted by a sturdily set head of leonine outline, his shoulders square, his great hands making his violin seem small. His pleasant, unshifting eyes were deeply brown and wide, with many things shining opaquely in their depths; and some indescribable quality stamped him with the mark of the artist—he, playing there at the curb!

Mary caught her breath at the gush of melody that swept from the strings, yet only less was she moved by the sight of him, the dark, sensitive, earnest face, so differentiated by an inner glow from the faces of those gathered about him, the great figure distinguished, for all the plainness of his clothes.

"A Brahms dance from the gutter!" whispered Celia.

At the moment he discovered her there, wedged in among the crowd, and at his look of recognition she pressed forward, drawing Mary with her.

He had taken off his hat and was about to pass it, but he put it behind him when she would have dropped a coin into it.

"One is all I can take," he said.

"Listen," she commanded, in a tone lowered so that it could not reach the crowd. "They always want good people at The Criterion—people who can really do things. Why don't you see them? I'm sure I can arrange it with the manager for you to get a trial, if you'll go. This sort of thing is preposterous!"

The color leaped to his face and

burned there ruddily. He smiled a queer half-smile, his eyelids flickering beneath her steady, searching look.

"You are very good," he stammered, "but I shall be gone to-morrow. So I think I wont trouble you; but indeed, indeed, you are *most* kind, *most*—"

"I'm sorry you don't think it worth while," she broke in hastily, and hurried away, leaving him standing there bare-headed in the sunlight.

When they reached the entrance of the big block which housed "The Hare's Foot," Mary looked back and saw him moving slowly about the crowd, his hat extended.

"To think of such a man being satisfied with a beggar's lot!" she breathed incredulously.

"I'm coming up to talk a minute," Celia said. Inside the shop she demanded: "I didn't exaggerate his talent, did I? I've heard good things all my life. Music has been a kind of passion with me. It's kept me broke—stony—ever since I can remember. So I know what I'm talking about when I say it's genius, rather than talent. Why, he compares with Kubelik, Elman, Kreisler! And then his manner, his presence—" She broke off, embarrassed at her own enthusiasm, covering her emotion with a laugh.

She crossed to the window, and with almost masculine impatience swept aside the curtains, letting in a feeble midday breeze. Her grave eyes, under their thick brows, were deeply thoughtful. She scowled out on the roof-tops below.

"Can you tell me why life should put as useless a person as Arthur Broome in that big house on the Avenue, with everything he wants at his command, and thrust that man down there into the street?" she demanded passionately; and without waiting for Mary to reply, she glanced at her watch again, and said she must get back to work.

Leola, looking up as the door closed on her, said briefly: "You aint said so, but I guess you've been worrying over Artie Broome and her, aint you? Well, you take it from me, Art Broome's not the one you need waste any time worrying about."

Mary turned upon her sharply.

"Aint you ever noticed that women like Celia Abbott are eight parts mother, one part fighter, and one part woman? And that it's the mother part that turns 'em into plain fools when they run up against somebody that's gettin' more'n his share of hard knocks? Somebody like this street player. See?"

"No, I don't," cried Mary Gray, indignantly. "How *can* you suggest—such a thing?"

"She wont get over it, either," went on Leola imperturbably. "She's not the kind to come through a thing like that lookin' as chipper as ever after a few days, with an extra feather in her hat, and her hair done a new way."

"You're talking pure nonsense," declared Miss Gray sharply, and moved away down the shop.

But—*was she?* The question struck Mary like a blow that evening, when some minutes after the others had left the shop, she descended into the crowded street on her way home. In front of the hotel adjoining, the big Broome touring car was drawn up, a smartly liveried chauffeur in his place, and Arthur Broome just helping Celia Abbott in.

Not six feet away stood the street player, his violin beneath his arm, his gaze riveted on the shining car, the dapper figure of its owner, the girl, slim and fresh and vivid. And as his eyes touched Celia, Mary, watching, saw a strange look leap into them, a look that in any other eyes than those of a beggar would have meant resolution, a determination to snatch her away from Broome and to win her for himself. A primal thing it was, that look, swift-born, high-burning, passionate.

A sudden cold ran all over Mary Gray's healthy young body. Did he dare to think, this wandering musician, this player at street corners, this man who might have made a place for himself and hadn't, that he could ever approach Celia, ever lift to her those dreamer's eyes that had not dreamed hard enough?

Did something in him, something lordly and arrogant, for all his shameless acceptance of his lot, argue that she might be happier with him than with

this other man, who was also out of her own class, this scion of a family that had always treated women lightly, men who had found their amusement where they would and had left behind them what they might?

In spite of herself she shivered.

The next morning Mary experienced the greatest relief to find the musician missing. But as the days passed she became vaguely aware of the persistent idea that he had *not* gone. It seemed incredible that he should have stayed, hoping for anything that approached friendship with Celia; but her friend's restlessness, her moodiness, and her feverish and impatient energy seemed to prove that something was wrong, that she had probably seen him again.

Then one evening in the middle of the week, Jim Perkins, the reporter, took them to dinner at a café he praised extravagantly, and she knew her fears had not been without foundation. They sat at a table near the window, she facing it, Celia, with her profile toward it, Perkins with his back to it. In the midst of dinner, out of the darkness of a brewing storm, the big figure of the street player loomed suddenly. He stood at the curb looking in, his seeking glance enveloping Celia. He seemed wholly oblivious of anyone else.

Mary, her eyes eloquent with indignation, stared at him in amazement: the man might have stepped from his own coupé, so immaculate, so perfectly correct, so distinguished looking was he in the evening clothes that showed beneath his top-coat!

As she stared, wonderingly, there rushed over her the sickening conviction that by masquerading as a gentleman he hoped to approach Celia. No doubt, as Leola had said, he had found the street corner more lucrative than vaudeville, and could afford the experiment.

At that moment Celia, moving restlessly beneath his look, turned slightly in her chair and their eyes met. He lifted his hat and hurried away into the enveloping darkness.

To Jim Perkins' laughing inquiry as to whether she had seen a ghost out there

in the storm, she smiled whitely and made no reply.

Later, over the coffee, in discussing the tangles of life, Perkins blamed women for walking wide-eyed into what their common sense taught them must end unhappily; and Celia demanded tempestuously: "Yes, but aren't there things too big for even the strongest woman to master?"

Mary, making herself ready for bed that night, was utterly miserable. And the following days did nothing to lessen her anxiety.

"Well, they was walkin' together yesterday," Leola announced startlingly, one morning. "He was waitin' at the entrance of the hotel when I went down from work last night. I crossed over and watched to see what'd happen. At first I thought she wasn't goin' to let him speak to her, but he must have said something that persuaded her, for after a minute off they went together!"

Mary Gray, flushing and frowning, nodded absently at two women who entered the shop chatting together. When they had passed the desk she turned with pronounced impatience upon Leola.

"She had offered to get him a trial at The Criterion. It must have been about that he wanted to speak to her."

Leola's shrewd little eyes seemed to screw themselves up in her wise little face. She smiled queerly, but offered no further comment as she answered the sharp summons of the telephone.

"I'll have a long talk with Celia this very day," Mary said to herself.

But Celia did not come up during the lunch hour, as was her almost invariable habit, and Mary knew there would be no chance to talk uninterruptedly at her hotel. The next day also Celia was missing.

Then one afternoon, just as the last patron had departed, all pink and wrinkle-less, Celia burst into the shop as if propelled by something behind her, and sweeping the long room and finding it empty of everyone except Mary Gray—busy setting her desk to rights for the night—and Leola—preening before the mirror in one of the booths—she quietly turned the key in the door.

"Thank heaven they're all gone!" she ejaculated, dropping into a chair near the desk. "May I stay till you're ready to go?"

Mary looked up wonderingly into the tumult of the dark eyes.

"What's the matter?" she asked, gently.



"I am calling you," he said. "Do you hear me? If you hear me, I cannot think you will not come. There is so much to say between us—so much to explain, to make plain!"

"I'm scared. I—I don't know when I've ever been so—frightened, in all my life." She was trying to steady herself. She even smiled a little. Her harried face seemed scarred with lines of conflict.

"It's the street player, isn't it?" Mary questioned furiously.

Celia nodded, silently. Then she said: "Don't blame him too much. Maybe it's half my fault. I suppose I ought to have shown him in the beginning—I've let him talk to me twice. He made The Criterion an excuse."

"And he's turned out—horrid?"

"No, no, not that! But strange—persistent. You'd think he had a right to—Oh, what's the use? You know what I mean."

"He's made love to you? Celia!"

"He hasn't done it yet, but he's going to. He'll *make* me hear him. He says so and—There! *There!* that's his knock! He's followed me!"

"Go into one of the booths and leave him to me," Mary Gray said. She was as white as her own crisp gown. The blue pools of her eyes were like water beneath a swift storm. "Stay, but keep out of the way, and don't do anything unless I tell you to," she whispered. Then she opened the door.

"Miss Abbott is here, isn't she? I must see her," the man in the hall said quietly.

The hall was full of people leaving their offices.

"Step in and close the door," commanded Miss Gray. Her eyes struck straight into his. "You can't see Miss Abbott. Don't you understand that?"

"I understand that she must feel the impudence of my asking to see her under the circumstances," he replied, seeming at the same time both embarrassed and curiously unembarrassed. "There is, however, something I must say to her."

"You can have nothing to say to her!" Mary cried sternly.

"Pardon me, but I shall have *everything* to say to her, when I have explained—"

His coolness added to her anger—that, and a kind of gentle masterfulness about him, beggar that he was. She broke in, with: "Do you expect to explain away the fact that you are—*who you are?*"

"I shall not try to do that," he returned, smiling.

"You're not ashamed of it?"

"I could have wished to make more of myself, to be sure; but no—I am not ashamed."

Mary smiled scornfully. "And because she is a working girl, poor and alone and unprotected, and has been kind to you, you dare to think—to think—"

"Because she is that, and so much more," he said.

"It's absurd," she snapped. "It's sheer madness!"

"Sometimes it seems so, I admit."

"Then go away and let her alone."

He shook his big, splendidly modeled head, and something in his eyes—the grave, earnest dreamer's eyes—turned her suddenly weak, almost tender. In that moment she felt her quarrel to be less with the man than with Nature, which making him fine in so many things, had left him slothful, unambitious, acquiescent.

"We are wasting words," he said. "There are things I would like to say which I cannot here." His glance strayed to Leola, who, with her back to them, bent over the ledger, apparently studying the next day's appointments, but plainly listening to every word uttered.

"I can say them only to Miss Abbott," he went on, lowering his voice. "Let me see her for my sake—and for her own. I saw you watching her go off in that car the other night, and it distressed you as much as it distressed me. Now I happen to know that the young gentleman in question is in trouble with a trust company, of which he is a member. Affairs are at a crisis with him. Suppose he should suddenly decide to go away, and without letting her know what has happened, should persuade her—"

"He couldn't! Not in ten thousand years!"

"I wish I could feel as sure of it as you. But suppose—"

She silenced him with a dismissing gesture. Her eyes said: "You poor fool! You want to snatch her away from Artie Broome to keep her for yourself?"

"I could offer her more than I can make you understand," he urged, reading her glance.

The money he had hoarded! Did he think *that* could buy him a wife like Celia?

"You must go away," Mary said sharply. "You must go at once."

"When I have seen Miss Abbott," he said with decision.

"She will not see you."

"I must be assured that she herself has said so."

"She knows you are here. There is no need of making a pretense of telling her."

"You mean that she is within the sound of my voice?"

Mary nodded.

"Then she will come," he said confidently. "Her sense of fair play will make her listen to me." He looked down the long room with its innumerable booths.

They waited, in silence. Mary could hear her own quick breath, and not more rigid was the wax figure on the counter than Leola, bending over the ledger on her table.

There was no sound anywhere in the shop.

"You give me your word that she hears me?" he demanded.

"I give you my word." Mary's voice was pitched to the key of her strained nerves.

He leaned a little forward, in his eyes the look she had seen there once before—a look she could not forget. He spoke in a lifted, indescribable tone, addressing the girl who cowered somewhere behind the softly swaying green curtains.

"I am calling you," he said. "Do you hear me? If you hear, I cannot think you will not come. There is so much to say between us—so much to explain, to make plain. Give me the chance to say it."

I'm asking it in the name of my happiness, and of your own."

He threw back his big head, listening, waiting. Out of bleak and wondering eyes Mary Gray watched him. Leola had crumpled the fresh pages of her ledger in a tense clasp, and standing so, faced down the room.

Silence filled "The Hare's Foot,"—silence, absolute and unbroken.

A minute they waited—two, three.

"You see!" cried Mary Gray; but all the fight had gone out of her voice, leaving it only quick and thin.

"I had hoped too much," he said with a long breath, and bowing, went out and closed the door quietly after him.

There followed a moment of silence to match the silence which had preceded it; then the curtains before one of the booths shot back on their brass rod and Celia came out, deadly white, and with that wildness in her dark eyes which burns sometimes at the heart of us all. Walking straight past Mary Gray, she said quietly: "I am going to hear what he has to say. I couldn't treat a dog like this!"

Then she was gone.

Mary sprang from the chair in which she had sunk. She had an impulse to snatch her back, to throw herself before this thing which threatened, but Leola's hand was on her arm.

"Sit still," cried Leola. "It's *her* that's got to decide. No livin' creature has a right to interfere. *It's between them two.*"

Leola settled the big, cheaply-smart hat over her small, excited face, whipped out a chamois from her bag and dusted her nose—noticing the crumpled pages of the ledger as she was doing it, and smoothing them. And as she glanced down the room where the little drama had just been enacted, she said with a tight, queer smile:

"Yet some folks yawn and say there aint anything doin' except in the movies!"

At eight o'clock that evening, Mary called Celia on the 'phone, but could not get her. At eight-thirty she telephoned again with the same success, and at nine

learned that the line was out of order and would not be repaired till morning. A vague idea of crossing the city to her friend's boarding house suggested itself, but was finally dismissed, and she went to bed with Leola's words in her ears, "It's between them two."

Why was she worrying like this, anyhow, Mary demanded of herself. Celia would listen to him, show him the utter folly of his infatuation, and send him away forever. Mary went to sleep at last, trying to believe this.

As she crossed from the car to "The Hare's Foot" the next morning, a name the newsboys were calling fell startlingly on her ears. She bought a paper and stepping into an entrance-way, scanned the big red headlines.

Artie Broome had misappropriated certain funds entrusted to him. An investigation pended, and he had fled, taking with him a tall, dark, slimly built, heavily veiled girl whose identity had not yet been disclosed! There followed several columns which she did not stop to read.

A tall, dark, slimly-built, heavily-veiled girl! Celia? Oh, no, *no!* What was she thinking of to suspect her friend at one moment of encouraging a street beggar, the next of eloping with an absconder. But suppose—suppose Celia hadn't known of his peculation? Suppose, carried away by his entreaties and harassed to death by the musician, she had consented—Oh, it was too impossible! Celia, with her cool veins, her quiet pulses! Celia, who knew so well how to take care of herself. She swept the idea indignantly aside.

But before she realized where she was going, she had entered the hotel where Celia worked.

Celia was not there!

She had not been there that morning, so the girl filling her place said. Yes, they had tried to call her up, but the line to her boarding house was out of order. Oh, of course, she *might* come any time, but it wasn't likely—she was never late. She must be sick.

Mary hurried to the beauty parlor. The burr of the electric machines greeted her. To avoid the heat, many patrons

had formed the habit of coming early. A murmur of voices drifted from the booths, and several of the little white enameled tables near the window were occupied.

At the first opportunity she called up the hotel, but Celia had not come, nor had any word been received.

Devoured by disquiet and anxiety, she sent Leola to Celia's boarding house.

When Leola had been gone for some

She shook her head dully. Her assistant was away, she explained.

"They'll be sorry," he said. He was evidently "in" on the secret. "I've just taken Mr. and Mrs. Fielding Sproule for him, and *she* wanted you."

Mr. and Mrs. Fielding Sproule! Even Mary Gray knew what those names stood for. So it *wasn't* the street player she had married, but Broome? The papers had evidently been wrong about his leav-



At the name, Leola plumped into a chair. Speech had forsaken her completely. "But how—but why—" Mary questioned in complete bewilderment.

time the driver of a taxi appeared with a message.

It was from Celia. It said:

This man is to bring you to me, dear. I think you'll know what for. I'm counting on you and Jim. It won't take but a few minutes, and I'll explain everything afterward. Try not to blame me till you understand.

"Can you go?" the man asked.

ing. Or perhaps he had turned back to face his accusers.

She wondered miserably if there was really any choice between the two.

A quarter of an hour later, Jim Perkins suddenly appeared, and Leola, almost at his heels.

"It's over, I suppose?" Mary groaned, hurrying down to the reception room to meet them.

"You bet!" he cried.

"You—you're *glad*?"

"Never was so glad of anything in my life! By George, it's bully!"

"That she should marry a street player!" exclaimed Leola.

"That she should marry a man like Artie Broome!" cried Mary.

It was Mary he heard. Mary, at whom he stared. Then he all but shouted: "By jiminy, I don't wonder you refused to come to the wedding, if that's who you think she married!"

"She *didn't*—she *did*— In mercy's name, Jim, whom *has* she married?" Mary demanded desperately.

"She has married Eugene Roald!"

At the name, known wherever music was known, Leola plumped into a chair, her hands hanging limply over the arms. Speech had forsaken her completely. She could only stare.

"But how—but why—" Mary questioned in utter bewilderment.

"Twenty years ago, Roald was a ragged little shaver playing on street corners," Perkins explained. "One day an old chap named Griswold heard him, and took him home with him, adopting him later. On the anniversary of that day, wherever he happens to be, Roald plays on the street. I guess it's a sort of

'Lest we forget' idea of his, you know—turning the money over to the poor little devils who *haven't* been rescued."

"But why didn't he explain to Celia at once?"

"Maybe he had his own romantic ideas about trying her. I don't know. Musicians are queer. Besides, he didn't want the story to get into the papers. They'd accuse him of doing the stunt for advertising purposes. Lord, but Celia made a ripping bride. Her eyes and the little silver balls on her bag were trying to outdance each other. They're coming here in a few minutes. It's fine the way they found each other," Perkins ended gravely.

"*He* knew, from the start, and *she* knew!" breathed Leola. "Gee, but it's great when you care so much! It sure is great!"

Jim Perkins was looking deep into Mary Gray's fine eyes.

"That kind of love is like a fresh water spring beneath the big, muddy pond of life," he said.

"And what would the pond be without it?" mused Mary.

"*Dear knows!*" exclaimed Leola, and began to take out her hat-pins, a smoldering fire in her ugly little face, a fire that lighted it to actual beauty.





Promised Lands

By John Barton Oxford

ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT T. REYNARD

HERE is a story of infinite charm. If it causes you to take Mr. Oxford's advice, it will have accomplished a mission. At the least, it will leave you with a glow of satisfaction.

It is all there in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, the first four verses. Read it sometime when you have nothing better to do. No particular harm ever came of reading the Scriptures, provided the print was good and the light sufficiently strong. Read and ponder how many there are who stand on Pisgah's top and gaze upon all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees unto Zoar—all those smiling, sun-kissed promised lands, which they may see but may not enter.

Ah, those wonderful visions from Pisgah's top! Read those first four verses of the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy sometime.....

THE bustle and excitement were over; the chatter and laughter of many voices had given way to an almost unnatural stillness in the house, broken only by the caterer's men, gathering up silver and china below stairs. The bridal couple had been whisked away in a limousine, and the trail of rice and decrepit shoes far down the street told of the traditional method of their departure.

In a corner of the living-room the roses and carnations of the huge floral arch were beginning to fade. A clock on the mantel chimed two, loudly, obtrusively, with that certain cocksure inextricableness which clocks are prone to take to themselves upon such occasions.

William Fenno paused at his task of winding up a length of white satin ribbon, the ribbon which had held back the guests at the foot of the stairs, took a sniff of the drooping rosebud in his buttonhole, grinned as he heard the caterer's men overturn a pile of dishes, and stepped into the living-room.

It was cold for October. A fire crackled briskly on the andirons, and before the hearth Mrs. Fenno, much be-coiffed as to her gray hair, much be-frilled and be-laced as to her gray silk gown, sat staring almost moodily at the flames.

She did not look up as her husband entered. Fenno—he could not have told why he moved on tiptoe—crossed the room, drew a chair beside hers and took one of her wrinkled hands in his. He did it very gently, very quietly, as if he needed to give that caress quite as much as she needed to receive it.

"Well, it's all over, Mother," he said cheerily. "The last of the three is gone. Even our baby is married."

Mrs. Fenno turned to him; her fingers tightened about his. She smiled bravely, although her under lip was quivering.

"Pretty affair, wasn't it?" Fenno hurried on, aware of the distress signals. "Nice boy, Bob is. They'll be happy. I'm glad it all went so well—Annie is so fussy about little things. I don't think I ever saw a prettier wedding."

Mrs. Fenno nodded. Then she looked into the fire. He well knew why she did not look at him just then.

"We're alone, Will," she said, and her voice was almost frightened, "alone for the first time in thirty-two years."

"Well, Bess, we started out alone," he reminded her. "We came here alone; we—"

"I didn't know I was going to feel so—so sort of lost," she interrupted.

Fenno looked at her quickly and keenly. He stooped to prod back some embers which had snapped far out on the hearth.

"We'd better not stay here," he said slowly.

Mrs. Fenno turned her eyes from the fire. She looked at him with speechless surprise, not unmingled with a certain very palpable relief.

"I'd have suggested it before, but I didn't know how you'd feel about it," he went on. "It seems you feel just as I do. I don't want to stay here. I want to close up the house and go away somewhere. I want to live—just you and I—live, as we have never had a chance to before."

"We can afford it, now the last chick has left us. We

haven't any more sacrifices to make, any more little denials to practice. There won't be any more weddings to think of, any more pretty clothes to buy for some one else, any more allowances to be doled out, a little more each month."

"Will!" said Mrs. Fenno, almost childishly, as they both arose.

"I'm not complaining, Bess, not a bit of it," said he stoutly. "I was just as glad to do it and do it properly as you were, wasn't I? But I've had my eyes open. I've seen you going without things for thirty-two years. You've had your pay, no doubt, and so have I, watching the rest of the brood. But I've thought about things, all the same. Why, you've never had a maid here, Mother, save when you were sick. It's all been for them—I don't begrudge it, mind you—



"I'll tell him to sell the house or rent it."

but the fact stands: it's all been for them. We've worked hard here; we've had to. Now, there's a good little old income—an amply sufficient income for just you and me.

"We'll have our fun now. I've had it in my mind for a long time. I've thought it out and schemed, only I wanted to be sure how you felt about it. I'm glad you'll feel lonesome here. That will let us do as I've planned.

"We'll shut this place right up—this place where you've washed dishes and cooked and cleaned and sewed for thirty-two years, and where I've tended the furnace and mowed the lawn and fixed the flower-beds and raised our kitchen truck for the same length of time. We'll sell it or rent it. We'll go into town. We'll take a corking little apartment; we can afford it now—one of the kind where we can't so much as lift our fingers. We'll live. We'll go to the theatre and dinners together; there'll be women's clubs and the like for you, and ball-games for me. We'll live. We've earned it."

Mrs. Fenno suddenly threw both her arms about his shoulders.

"Oh, Will! Really?" she asked in excited tones.

"Surest bet you ever made," cried he, his enthusiasm mounting. "Why, I've even picked out the place—at the Cumberland; you know it. We won't have to lift our hands. Everything'll be done for us. Three rooms and a bath, overlooking the park; corking café; you'll have a maid to hook you up and do your hair and all that sort of thing."

"Won't it be dreadfully extravagant, Will?" she doubted.

He waved his hand in lordly fashion.

"It's well within our means now. I tell you we're going to *live*," he declared.

"When?" she asked, her eyes shining.

"Now—to-day," said he. "You'll leave this house just as it is. You won't even clean up. We'll get somebody to do that. We'll have all new things in there, too. Just pack enough to keep you going and we'll get out of here this afternoon. I've got a refusal on that suite at the Cumberland. I was going to put it up to

you and see how you felt about it. Now that's all settled. No time like the present. Your work days are done, Mrs. Fenno. The sooner we leave, the better."

She kissed him resoundingly on his high, bald forehead.

"Will, you dear, good man!" she cried. "Go? I'll pack up right away."

"I'll run right down to Norton's office in the square," said he, "and put the house in his hands. Tell him to sell it or rent it; it's all one to us."

The clock chimed another inexorable hour. Mrs. Fenno got up and went into the hall.

"Oh, I'm going to make up for lost time," said she with ill suppressed excitement. "You watch me!"

"You bet you are," said Fenno, taking up his hat and overcoat from the hall rack and moving to the front door.

He blew her a gallant kiss and went out. The caterer's two assistants, loading the auto' truck at the front gate, watched him swing jauntily down the street.

"Wouldn't think that old buck was nearing seventy, would you?" said one of them.

"Well, if he's as young as he feels, he's somewhere 'round sixteen," said the other.

At seven o'clock that night, at one of the little tables with its softly shaded lights in the café at the Cumberland, William Fenno and his wife ate a leisurely dinner and surreptitiously held hands beneath the corner of the tablecloth between courses.

"What show to-night?" Fenno asked, pushing across to her an evening paper, opened to the amusement column.

"Aren't we too tired?" said she.

"We haven't anything to do to-morrow but rest," he reminded her.

Mrs. Fenno wrinkled her brow as she adjusted her glasses and ran her eye down the column.

"That's so," she chuckled. "You'll have to remind me of that often, Will. I somehow like to be reminded of it, too."

"How does this ranch strike you?" said he.

She said nothing; but the way she looked at him was quite enough.

"I keep thinking I've got to go down and look at the furnace," he confessed.

"And I'm wondering what on earth there is in the house for breakfast," she laughed.

She looked contentedly about her—at the other tables with their shaded lights, through the filmy window draperies at the glowing spots illumining the stretches of the park.

"And it isn't just to-day, nor to-morrow, Will. That's the glory of it," she breathed.

"Hereafter this is us," he grinned, sweeping his own eyes about. "Pretty good idea of mine, wasn't it, Bess?"

The April days began to grow warmer. The trees in the park were putting forth the first soft green of embryo leaves. Now and again, through the open windows of that apartment at the Cumberland came haunting, distant bird voices.

William Fenno, smoking his after-lunch cigar, looked out with suddenly troubled eyes.

Then he was aware that his wife was watching him from the dressing-table in the room beyond, where she was overhauling a drawerful of gloves.

He smiled and blew ceilingwards a great cloud of smoke. Also he stretched himself comfortably in the chair.

"Say, this is great," he observed.

He had been saying it often of late, far too often—every time, in fact, he thought Mrs. Fenno was looking at him as she was looking at him now.

She sighed, as she picked at a tiny hole in the finger of a glove.

"We've been so happy here, Will," said she. "I never realized people could be so happy."

"It's great," he said again, but noticing her eyes were on the glove, his own sought the trees in the park. They were filled with that same vaguely troubled light again.

"You're going out to the game this afternoon, aren't you?" she inquired.

Fenno started slightly.

"Yes, sure!" said he. "Le's see! H'm, yes. Oughta be a corking game. Wouldn't care to go, I suppose?"

"Mercy, no. I don't know a thing about it," she laughed. "I'm going down to that lecture at Frost Hall. Mrs. Carlin speaks. I think I'll start early. It's hard to get a seat if you're not there early."

Fenno sat up. He looked at his watch.

"I think I'll start along now," said his wife.

She put on her wraps, came over to his chair and kissed him.

"Oh, I'm so happy here," said she. "I hope it will be a good game, dearie."

The door closed behind her. Fenno got up and began to pace the room. Every few minutes he stopped at the front windows and looked out at the trees in the park.

"She's so happy here," he muttered to himself. "Well, darn it all, she deserves to be happy. She's going to be happy, too, so long as she lives, if I have anything to say about it."

Ten minutes later, he too left the apartment.

He went to the corner. Cars, freighted to the running-boards, and bearing the sign: "To the Ball Grounds," went past him one after another. He watched them go, grinning.

The car he finally boarded would take him nowhere near the grounds. Indeed, it went creaking out of the city, through the suburbs, and at length past open fields.

He left it at the drowsy little square of a certain outlying town. He had left it there many times of late when he was supposed to be at the ball game.

Down a tree-bordered street he walked briskly, and finally turned in at the gate of a little house. It was the little house William Fenno had brought his bride to some thirty-five years ago.

There was a big sign on the front lawn. He scowled as he read it:

FOR SALE
OR
TO RENT

He opened the front gate and went in. Fishing in his pocket he found a key, opened the door of the basement, and disappeared. Presently he came forth,

arrayed in faded blue overalls, an old hat and a pair of lop-sided shoes. He carried a hoe, a rake and a trowel.

Every year by the south fence there had been a pansy bed. Fenno, dropping to his knees with a contented chuckle, began the usual pansy bed.

He worked away happily. Now and again as his eyes fell on the sign on the front lawn he scowled. Then he would shake his head.

"Mother deserves it. She's earned it," he would repeat to himself, and go on with the work in the warm loam.

At length the earth was all turned and smoothed, the bed was ready. He went into the basement again, where, hidden away in a corner, were four baskets of pansies. He had put them there the last time he was supposed to be at the ball game.

Fumbling about for them in the semi-gloom of the place, he suddenly stopped and stood listening. What was that noise? From up-stairs some steady *swish-swish*, *swish-swish*.

He crept up the stairs. It seemed to come from the dining-room. The shutters were closed, the curtains drawn. He caught the glow of the gas-stove in the kitchen; the smell of soap on paint smote his nostrils. He crept forward.

There in the dining-room, an old calico wrapper pinned up at the waist, her face red, her hands parboiled, was his wife, scrubbing away at the dining-room mop-boards, and humming

softly to herself as she scrubbed.

He started to move stealthily forward; a board creaked. Mrs. Fenno looked up. The cloth fell from her hand. In her perturbation and her flurried attempt to arise from her knees, she upset the pail of water. Something like a scream came from her throat. Then she saw who he was, and clutched at the table, leaning there, shaken, crestfallen.

"I—I—" she began in a queer voice, "I couldn't help it. I—just had to. I didn't want you to know—"

He sprang across the room and threw an arm about her. He was laughing im-

moderately. He kissed her cheeks, her hair, her eyes. He pressed her close to him. He stepped in the overturned pail and laughed still more heartily.

"Come out and look at my pansy beds," he snickered, and thumped her shoulder.

He led her to the front door and out onto the porch. Then he sped towards the sign on the lawn and began pulling at it.

She was beside him in a moment.

"Let me help you," she panted happily, clutching the shank of the sign and pulling with him.

No harm ever came of reading the Scriptures, provided the print was good and the light sufficiently strong. Sometime when you have nothing better to do, read those first four verses of the last chapter of Deuteronomy. They are very enlightening — especially the fourth verse.



"I—I—" She began in a queer voice.

In— Bloodstone Onyx

By L. J. Beeston

Author of "Pauline March," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY M. LEONE BRACKER

IS it possible for a man who has been a successful thief to reform and stay reformed? Will his old associates drag him down? This is the problem dealt with by L. J. Beeston, whose stories of "Pauline March" won a big place.

AS he had promised, Tremarra called for his daughter at a quarter to eight o'clock at "The Birches," a friend's house, between Hampstead and Harrow, where she had been spending the day.

Tremarra came in his gray car, which stopped outside the tall iron gates in the road, while the chauffeur ran along the short gravel drive and knocked at the door under the porch that was covered with yellow jessamine. Hilda was quite ready. She climbed into the car, bestowed a hug and a kiss on her waiting parent, and they were off again.

All day rain had been falling, but the evening had set in over the quiet country in a spirit of tranquility, of rest, with gorgeous rifts over the departed sun, and fragrant breath of the drenched earth.

"You have enjoyed yourself?" questioned Tremarra. He sheltered with his palms an automatic lighter which he applied to a cigar.

"Oh, yes, in a quiet way," he was assured. Hilda threw one end of a fur stole round her throat. She was very small, with a little dark face, and bright eyes which had a timorous expression.

"Good," said Tremarra, snapping down the lid of the automatic lighter. "And we will finish it in a jollier fash-

ion. I managed those two theatre tickets, after all. Two returns. We are going straight there. I am not dressed, knowing that you would not be; but then the seats are not front ones, and—"

At that moment the car drew up with a swerve and rasp of protesting tires. Swinging round a corner into one of the Hampstead streets, it had almost knocked down a man. The latter leaped back with an athletic movement. He shot an angry glance at the occupants of the car, and his eyes met Tremarra's.

No mischief having been done, the chauffeur urged his charge forward.

Tremarra bit his cigar clean through. One of the fiercest impulses of his life was upon him to look round; but he gripped it with all the power of his will, and stared straight ahead.

"If looks could kill we should be dead," smiled Hilda. "And I am afraid it was our fault." The incident lingered in her mind for a minute. For one thing, the man had seemed extraordinarily handsome and not ill-dressed, with clear-cut, alert features, somewhat distorted now by a gust of sudden anger, showing excellent teeth.

The car rushed with a crushing sound over the wet road.

Just then another small episode oc-

curred. They were passing a house surrounded by a substantial piece of ground enclosed by a thin wood paling. It was a house with a roof of red tiles, and stucco-faced gables, and hedged in by clumps of pine and laurel and cypress, with a gas lamp on each of the two stone piers of the gate-way. Scaffolding had been erected on the north side, and a workman was in the act of climbing down when one of the poles came loose. The man saved his bones by an adroit leap, but the pole swung inwards upon a projecting bay, smashing a window pane or two. The fellow's spring, his shout, the splintering of the glass, and a glimpse of the room's brilliantly-lighted interior, composed an instantaneous scene sharply defined to Tremarra's momentary gaze as the car shot by.

It forced a little scream to Hilda's lips, and the chauffeur evinced a hesitation to continue.

"Go on!" ordered Tremarra in a harsh, imperative voice.

And then he permitted himself to look behind the car.

He saw a motor van plunging along in a threatening fashion, a couple of cyclists, and a taxicab.

He leaned towards the chauffeur.

"As fast as you can, Joynson, with safety."

The speeding car responded. It flew onward with a deep and satisfied purr of appreciation. They hummed through the Hampstead Road, shot past the high electric tramcars, the monstrous rumbling motor omnibuses, glided here, darted through there. The greasy wood paving flashed beneath them, a blur. At a perilous pace they flitted across the Euston Road, heading due west.

Tremarra continued to look behind, watching the taxicab. It was splendidly driven. On a clear road its comparatively small power would have dropped it in the rear; as it was, it held its own.

Tremarra addressed Joynson again. "That will do. Easy," said he.

"We shall have five minutes to spare," smiled Hilda.

Tremarra crushed his shoulder blades into the cushioned back. He tossed away

his spoilt cigar. "Quite that, girly," said he easily, interlacing his fingers. "Let us hope it will be a good show."

And then he added, to himself—"I shall kill him before the night is over."

He looked back no more. The theatre was reached, Joynson given instructions to be on the spot soon after eleven. It was the first night of a new play, and there was no break in the ranged rows of faces from floor to ceiling. The delight of it held Hilda spellbound. Tremarra seemed to watch the stage, to listen to the music of the *entr'actes*, to be absorbed in the unfolding drama; only the receded blood did not come into his face again; and once he looked at his hands, spreading them out; at his large, muscular hands with the powerful fingers. And he clenched them slowly, driving the nails into the palms.

It was over at last, even the continued applause, and the author's unintelligible speech. A packed throng surged into the foyer. Tremarra descended the steps, his daughter on his arm. Suddenly he felt a touch on his shoulder. He had expected nothing else.

He glanced up and a smile of greeting lightened his eyes.

"Wildish! So it *was* you, after all?"

Hilda turned at the exclamation. Her brows went up in surprise. Her father was addressing the man who had nearly got himself under the wheels of the car.

"Indeed it was! Yes, you well nigh ran me down; but if it brought us together again, so much the better. Frankly, I followed you. The chance of meeting so valued a friend was not one to be lost. Your daughter?"

"Yes."

The other lifted his hat, satisfied with the half-introduction. Undeniably he was handsome. Calamity must hit this man very shrewdly to put out the mocking smile in his black eyes.

They walked away from the portico to where the car was waiting.

"You will not mind returning alone?" questioned Tremarra of Hilda as Joynson pulled open the door.

His tone suggested only quiet affection, and with affection she readily granted the request. The car drew out

and mingled with the press in the brilliantly-lighted street.

"A pretty girl you have," said Wildish. "I congratulate you. Fortune has not deserted you, then? To me she has not been so gracious. True, I am wearing a good coat; and I dined excellently; but the immediate future is—nebulous."

"Shall we walk a little way?"

"And enjoy a fine night. Willingly."

They strolled up the Haymarket.

"You are following the old line, Lester?" questioned Wildish.

Tremarra drew a deep breath. "Yes," said he. It was a lie, and it jarred his every nerve and made conscience bleed afresh.

"Good! I was hoping so, because I have not broken away. Not I. Don't suppose I could if I tried. The old enchantment, you know, the ancient fascination. I left New York a fortnight ago. I lost confidence, not in myself, but in my luck, which has never been quite the same since you quitted the States, Lester, and I had to work alone. Gentlemen cracksmen! It has a staccato ring. We did rarely. Then you disappeared. You might have said adieu. But all's well that ends well. And you certainly have been playing the game to good purpose in London. That motor car now; it was swagger. You must have shaken down some good plums."

They crossed Piccadilly Circus and turned up Shaftesbury Avenue, the theatre traffic melting rapidly in all directions.

"I will not deny it." Tremarra forced the demand which lurked behind the other's praise. It showed itself.

"You are too good a sportsman to forget old friends, Lester."

"What's the figure?"

"I could do with five hundred of the best."

Tremarra nodded without replying. Turning into a quieter street he appeared lost in consideration of the request. In reality his eyes darted glances here and there into the shadows, dark corners, squalid alleys. On the brink of a terrible crime, his heart beat no jot the faster for it.

He was going to strangle Wildish within the next five minutes. He could do it, and do it quickly. He had the strength, the nerve, the will. There was but one man on the wide earth whose presence had for him a mortal dread. This man walked by his side. Together they had worked in the States, plunderers of others' goods. Tremarra had turned down that soiled page long ago. A woman's love, a new country, and honest life; this was part two of the book.

He knew Wildish, the depths of him. He was perfectly well aware that this man would blast his happiness, would hang like a leech upon him when he came to know the truth. He foresaw the unborn years: the disclosure of his secret, his daughter's shame for him. Now or never, then. Irresolution would palsy him. And he had never played with resolve in his life.

He turned into a bye street, where tall lodging houses, stained with time and grime, rose from the deserted pavement. Wildish sniffed—"You choose a charming promenade!"

"Five hundred pounds, you say?" mused Tremarra in an assumed absent fashion. "A wide request, but one which I ought not to refuse to you. At the same time—"

The sentence was never finished. He stopped in his walk, as if lost in consideration. A glance to right and left showed him solitude—momentary, perhaps, but complete. A black cat darted from behind a railing and across the alley. A crying child wailed in one of the houses. And a murderous flame, a devilish frenzy, ran scorching through Tremarra's veins. In another second his fingers would have closed upon Wildish's throat, would have dragged him into a doorway and left his dead body there for the morning light to discover; but in that instant of insane passion a better way flashed up before Tremarra, like a fireball which bursts over some dark sea.

Died the murderous impulse; the chaotic thought took shape again. The reaction was so intense that a cold dew broke out from every pore.

What was he going to do? Fight fire



A sound made him turn abruptly A girl was standing on the threshold of the drawing room



drawing room, holding a lighted candle She called out in obvious fear: "Who's there?"

with fire. He would commit one more, his very last, burglary.

Impossible to conceal his agitation. Wildish stepped back. He said suspiciously:

"I should like to know what the devil is in your mind?"

Tremarra pulled himself together. "That is simply answered," he responded. "To speak the truth, Wildish, I was not, as you know, best pleased to see you this evening; but on second thought it seems to me that our meeting may be a fortunate thing for us both. In plain words, I had my eye on a bone, a good meaty one, which I was going to pick to-night. And I wanted no help over it, either. But one cannot foresee all exigencies, and you are the one man whom I can rely upon. Five hundred pounds you shall have—if you can wait; but I offer something better. You may finger as much, and more, without the waiting, if you care to join in the game—our old game—I have on hand to-night."

They emerged together from the dark passage.

"To-night?" echoed Wildish, with narrowed eyes. "Where is it?"

"Hampstead way."

"You know the inside of the house like a book?"

"You are not going to insult my intelligence with crude questioning?"

"True for you. I can give you no points in the game which is our existence. Who found a way into Siebenthaler's house in Fifth Avenue and took his Petitot enamels from under his nose? My friend, Lester Sinjohn. Who—by the way, you have changed that name since you left me?"

"If we act, we move at once."

"Rebuked. Well, *en avant, mon ami*."

"We will go there straight. No need to change. Here, as in New York, a dress shirt is a good friend to gentlemen of our caliber, dazzling the eye of the law in critical instants. We'll take a taxi to within half a mile of the place."

They left the taxi after twenty minutes' rapid run.

They were then on the Hampstead heights, where a wind came whistling out of darkness and blew away into

darkness. Some scattered points of light, vague, outlining no determinate shape, showed where London ran up to a railway line which stopped it dead from the open country. A shunting locomotive uttered a melancholy cry.

"This way," said Tremarra. He dropped into a hollow filled with coarse fern, skirted a high wall of brick gray with old lichen, cut across a strip of common and climbed a bank into a roadway. He added: "It will be short and sharp."

"What's the goods?" queried Wildish.

"Twelve bloodstone onyx cameos by Pistrucci. We will divide the set. Of course we must try widely-sundered markets. Fairly well-known, and precious cameos, and not to be disposed of in England. If you will let me know—"

"There are three men in New York City who may be approached any day of the year with Pistrucci cameos. I choose that direction."

"That is understood, then. —That is the house, with scaffolding on the north side."

It was a house with a roof of red tiles, and stucco-faced gables, and surrounded by clumps of pine and laurel and cypress, with a gas lamp on the two stone piers of the gateway.

The lamps had been extinguished. A long, stealthy glance to right and left and Tremarra slipped into the short drive, his companion at his heels. The soft shrub beds yielded no sound as they edged a way to the north side. An open network of scaffolding went up to the third story. Tremarra whispered: "You can climb a twelve-foot pole?"

"Try me!"

Tremarra swarmed up first and gained a transverse pole lashed to two uprights; he continued his ascent from this and had little difficulty in reaching a large bay window with small panes. Several of these panes of glass were smashed, and the drawn-down linen blind made a whispering sound as the draught swung it. To reach and unfasten the window bolt through one of the smashed panes was easy. Tremarra climbed through and rested upon a thick-pile carpet. He was

joined by Wildish a few seconds later. The latter, in climbing through, touched the lower sash with his head. He muttered a curse.

Both kept silent for a full minute. The slight noise had not been heard, apparently. Wildish murmured:

"This is the room?"

"No; it connects with this, I believe."

"I had better strike a light?"

"I think so."

The tiny flare showed them a large room covered with a white carpet, gilt and gold furniture, and a grand piano. On two sides were doors. Tremarra hesitated for an instant. He muttered: "I know that room fairly well, but I have always approached it from the outside, not from here. Still, I think we are on the scent. Try another match."

He took hold of the door handle and turned it ever so gently. A glance showed him mostly bookshelves round a square room, a bureau, a writing-desk, and two inlaid cabinets.

"Right," said Tremarra.

Wildish looked round and saw two gas lamps, one on either side of the mantelpiece, with inverted burners. He lighted one of these lamps. Turning, he saw Tremarra trying the drawers of one of the buhl-inlaid cabinets.

"Locked, of course," said he.

"But flimsy affairs," answered Wildish in a low tone. He walked on tip-toe round the room and found a steel paper-knife on top of a revolving bookcase. Its application proved successful; one of the locked drawers gave with a slight rending sound. It contained papers and a few unframed photographs.

"If they are removed, so much the worse for us," he grunted, getting to work upon another drawer. It made more sound in opening than was desirable, but inside were twelve cases of Russia leather, and in each case, in a velvet bed, rested one of the Pistrucci cameos, engraved in bloodstone onyx.

Wildish muttered: "They are of great beauty. What a pity to spoil the set."

"Aren't you satisfied?" snarled Tremarra.

"Perfectly. And then, in any event, neither of us could dispose of the twelve in bulk."

"Make your choice, then."

"I have already done so." Wildish snapped down six of the cases and dropped them into a side pocket. "Keep yours dark until I'm in the States. I'll catch to-morrow's boat. If you have any difficulty in disposing, send yours across to me to manage." He looked round, and was observing, "Five minutes' inspection might—" when they heard the protest of a stair which creaks under a human tread.

Wildish made a move as if to turn off the light, but Tremarra was before him. Wildish whirled round in search of the door by which he had entered. As he set eyes upon it, his companion plunged the room in darkness. Wildish darted through the outer room and reached the open window. He heard a terrible oath from the other, who had crashed against some article of furniture. He climbed through the window, balancing himself for a second on the sill.

"Jump, blast it all!" panted the voice of Tremarra.

Wildish launched himself out to the scaffolding, glided to the ground, and the night swallowed him.

"Gone!" said Tremarra, peering down. "A long adieu!"

A sound made him turn abruptly, even as he gave a sigh of relief. A girl was standing on the threshold of the drawing-room—holding a lighted candle. She called out in obvious fear:

"Who is there?"

"What, Hilda! Afraid of thieves?" exclaimed Tremarra. And suddenly he began to laugh—long, loud, bizarre laughter. Wildish had bolted, would sail on the morrow. He might never return; but what if he did? What if he ever discovered the ruse which had shaken off his clutch? He would find Tremarra vanished, and a trail well covered.

Was it not a good joke, a trick well deserving of merriment? But not this long, loud, bizarre laughter which suggested the passing of some unspeakable fear!

The Best Years

ILLUSTRATED

BY R. F. JAMES

MANY'S the time you've heard some woman say: "I'd rather be an old man's darling than a young man's slave." And how, you may have wondered, does the saying work out in life? Truly a subject for a master pen! That is the sort wielded by Carolyn Shipman. She is the most daringly forceful woman writer whose work appears these days.



Goaded by her last words, he turned to her fiercely . . . "You ought to have married a younger man. I'm too old." . . . "Yes, you are too old. I ought never to have married you." Her lips quivered with suppressed pain.

of Her Life

By Carolyn Shipman

Author of "The Two Standards," etc.

ONE dissension leads to two, and two to many more. The trick of the marriage game is to check-mate the first.

When Linda Temple married, she was on the threshold of a career. With a glorious voice and mounting ambition, she saw the years stretch before her full of infinite possibilities. Her love of "the softness of life," however, had made her yield to the urgent pleading of Beverley Audenried, a man no longer young, but keen-minded and worldly. His ability to feed her appetite for luxury made her briefly oblivious of her ambition. Yet in her sub-conscious mind still lay the desire to achieve and the knowledge of her power. And it was her stirring ambition that caused their first dissension. Six months after their marriage, she mentioned her desire to sing.

"I don't wish you to earn money by singing. I am earning enough for both of us."

His tone had been final. She knew the futility of argument. Generous in most matters, he was old-fashioned and selfish, in this, she thought bitterly.

As she recalled this first misunderstanding, her resentment increased, tingeing the undercurrent of her thoughts. The gifts that her husband showered upon her became the price of her liberty. She realized that her "tower of strength," as she had called him, was immutable as stone. Always between them stood the phantom of her lost career.

Fresh dissensions followed. The end of the first year found the ardor of her love burning low. In the second year it was temporarily fanned into flame by the coming of her child. But the child

lived only a week. As Linda gazed at his tiny dead face, the image of his father's, she rebelled against the long months of waiting whose result was blank defeat. During that short tenure of his frail little life, forgetting the terrors and perils of her ordeal, when her own life was almost despaired of, she had planned a career for her son, as a singer whose voice would enthrall the hearts of great audiences.

Audenried's disappointment had an even keener edge. As he had fingered the dainty garments of the child before its birth, gazing in silent awe at their tiny proportions, he too had planned a career for his son, as an inventor who should perfect his father's designs, and in whom he could renew his youth.

To be a father for the first time when a man has turned sixty, stimulates the imagination and sets the clock back ten years. But to see the object of one's hopes and dreams snatched away at life's threshold, dulls the mind and ages the body.

In subtle manner, because he knew that Linda should never have another child, Audenried felt aggrieved. First he blamed fate for denying him paternity, to which every man is entitled; then he blamed nature for withholding from his wife the power to bear him another child without endangering her life; finally, by an irrational cerebration characteristic of primitive man, his irritation was transferred to Linda herself. He did not mean to blame her, but unconsciously to him her identity became inextricably involved in the frustration of his hopes. He felt cheated of his birthright. Whereas the living child would have helped to bridge the chasm between

their natures, the dead child only widened it.

Then business went wrong, and it became necessary to retrench. Audenried's buoyant optimism, which had heretofore carried him over many a rough road, now failed him. He grew taciturn and irritable. His inability to provide for Linda lavishly, as in the first years of their marriage, served to aggravate his condition.

Finally, on the heels of his mental depression, came "the descent of the downward path," which he had once laughingly predicted. But it came much sooner than he, in his masterful egoism, had thought possible. The fires of his passion burned low and were almost extinguished. The process of gradual disintegration of the vital forces which normally extends over a period of several years, in him was accomplished in less than a year. At sixty-one he suddenly found himself an old man, with an ardent wife a score of years younger. His bitter pride rebelled at the discovery.

Again Linda became the object of his secret aversion, a constant reminder of his lost youth. Even casual contact with her was repugnant.

At this point his wife began once more to think of her career. She recalled the happy hours spent in her little bare room at the top of Madame Paulier's *pension*, when she stood with hands clasped behind her and head thrown back, pouring out the full volume of her golden voice until the walls reverberated. That was living! How hard she used to work for one word of praise from the master. Just one little word in his dry, staccato voice was sufficient to buoy her up for days.

And she recalled too, with thrilling pain, the mellow tones of Malcolm MacKenzie's voice as he sang, that last night in Paris, "*Ich grolle nicht*," his eyes fixed on hers, as if he saw the snake of which he was singing. That look had never left her. She wondered where he was and what he was doing.

Gradually her relations with her husband became more and more strained, until finally one morning the storm broke suddenly. His mood had been unusually

brutal and irritating. Money was the occasion—the eternal, infernal disturber of marital equilibrium.

"Aren't you spending a good deal recently?" he demanded as he handed her a roll of bills.

She glanced at him sharply. "Not more than usual. Why do you ask?"

"It seems to me of late that you're always asking me for money."

"There was a time when I didn't have to ask. You gave it to me without asking. If you had allowed me to sing for money, I should not now be humiliated by this necessity." She paused while he stirred uneasily in his chair. "You not only deprived me of intense pleasure, but of the possibility of financial independence."

"There was no need for independence. I was earning enough without your working."

"Oh, I understand it all. I used to think it was your chivalrous desire to protect me that made you object. Now I know it was your foolish pride—for fear of what people would say. You didn't care how much I worked for money if only no one knew it." He kept silence and she continued bitterly, "I don't want money."

"You wanted it all right when you married me," he broke in brutally.

"You give me food and clothes and shelter, and think they're sufficient. I'm starving for love and congenial companionship. There's no real sympathy between us. I've tried to help you and you won't let me. I'm neither your wife nor your mistress. You never confide in me, and you never come near me. You let me go out with other men and never turn a hair."

Goaded by her last words, he turned on her fiercely. "You're in love with some one else. That's what's the matter."

"I believe you're jealous."

"I told you you ought to have married a younger man. I'm too old."

"Yes, you *are* too old. I ought never to have married you." Her lips quivered with suppressed pain. "You won't find me here to-night. I'm going to the mountains, to my sister's."

He flung angrily out of the room, banging the door behind him.

II

She packed her trunk for the half-past five boat. After dinner she paced the deck restlessly, trying to face her problem and settle it wisely. Wherein had she failed her husband? Not in any way consciously. Of his unreasonable irritation over the loss of their child she had no knowledge, nor was she more than vaguely aware of his proud sensitiveness in regard to his failing virility. She was inclined to attribute his undemonstrativeness to mental preoccupation over business worries.

Why had he treated her like a mistress to be coddled in ignorance of his affairs? He had insulted her intelligence! Should she not, seriously, have married a younger man? Yet they had been very happy during the first six months of their marriage. Happy materially, to be sure, but what joys could transcend the exquisite delights of passionate love?

Did he really need her now? Would it not be better for them to separate, since her presence seemed only to irritate him? With a pang she recalled the glamour of those early months, when he wrapped her closely round with the rosy, silken garment of luxury. She had reveled to the full in the sweet softnesses of life. Now all was so changed!

When she recalled the secret fires that often consumed her, she felt that her throbbing life was shackled to a corpse. And her soul, which had emerged from the chrysalis, met no response in him.

In this hopeless mood she leaned over the boat-rail, gazing down into the dark, churning water. The moon glided under a cloud and a stiff breeze sprang up. Her rebellious spirit courted the tempestuous in nature. She longed for a raging storm, with the shock of reverberating thunder.

With a sense of exhilaration she drew a chair near the bow, directly behind the only other passenger on deck. For several moments she sat lost in thought. Then the shoulders of her neighbor attracted her. They were broad and immo-

bile, suggesting strength and reliability. Not a movement did their owner make,—she watched him intently. Was he sleeping? Five minutes passed. He seemed carved in stone. It was uncanny!

Overcome by curiosity and startled out of her self-absorption, she arose and walked to the railing. Still no movement. Suddenly she faced about and exclaimed in surprise,

"Malcolm Mackenzie!"

The man turned quickly and sprang to his feet.

"Linda! You here! Where are you going?"

He took her two hands in his strong ones and looked down into her sad, tear-stained eyes. His own softened into a tender warmth.

"I'm going to the White Mountains to visit my sister."

The break in her voice caught his ear. Narrowly he watched her "It's six years since we last met, just before your marriage."

In the silence that followed, he studied her. "Are you happy, Linda? You know I told you your last day in Paris that I wanted you to be happy, even if you would not marry me."

No reply.

"Tell me, Linda, are you happy?"

His urgent sympathy broke down the wall of her pride. Trembling with the surge of her emotions, she covered her face with her hands. Then bit by bit, her story came out. She told it as if she were an overburdened penitent at the confessional. As he listened, Mackenzie's face darkened sympathetically.

"He's a brute! What ails the fellow? He must be mad to repulse a sweet woman like you. Linda, leave him! Come to me and let me love you and care for you. You're wasting the best years of your life on a man who can't appreciate you. What are you doing for yourself? Nothing! You're wasting your talents and eating your heart out in loneliness. Come to me, darling. I'll be so good to you. You know how I love you. I have enough money for both of us—now."

He drew her to him, and would have kissed her, but she forced herself from his embrace.

"The best years of my life! Wasting them! Yes, I am wasting them, and I do long for love. Don't tempt me, Malcolm, don't!" she cried passionately. "I'm trying to think out the best thing to do, and I must decide without prejudice. Don't tempt me! Good night!"

"Will you let me write to you? I know the address."

"No, please don't. Be good to me, Malcolm!"

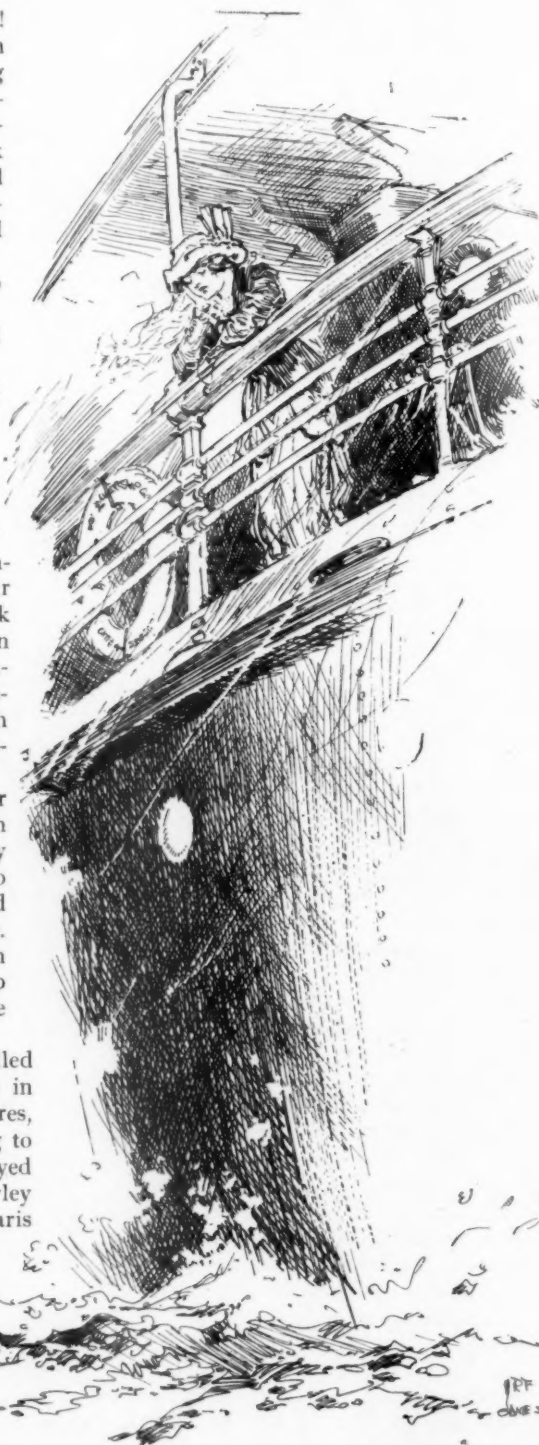
She was gone, and the next morning he lost all trace of her.

III

On the fifth morning after her arrival in the mountains, invigorated by the change of air and scene, Linda started to walk through the woods. It was an opalescent October day of tender, deceptive softness, suggestive of spring, yet filled with the poignant beauty of the decadent year.

The bright sadness tinged her spirit as she ascended through the Cathedral Pines. The heavy brown carpet of needles gave no echo of footsteps. Not a sound penetrated the green silence. Gazing up at the sky through the boughs, she felt a deep peace filter through with the sunshine into her soul.

Closing her eyes, she recalled the many-candled little church in Paris,—Nôtre Dame des Victoires,—where she burned an offering to the Blessed Virgin as she prayed for happiness with Beverley Audenried. She could pray in Paris as nowhere else—every church was open and friendly, inviting to prayer.



Her rebellious spirit courted the tempestuous in nature.

And happiness had come to her, but had flown.

Up through the pines she walked to Mt. Surprise, where the wooded valley lay at her feet. No sharp frost had as yet painted a riot of flaming color in the trees. There was a veiled softness as of rich, dark, closely-woven tapestry. The purple mountains beyond were banked with green, deep and delicate, with misty yellow and hazy red.

Here on the mountain the day was blue and gold. The white-barked birches swayed yellow against the clear blue sky, in a soft yellow breeze perfumed with the pungent odor of the pines. The mellow warmth of Indian summer flooded all her being. Her soul was bathed in the luminous colors of the most glorious month in all the year. Her mood was religious, yet tinged with the aching sweetness of a lover's tryst, whose bliss is shadowed by the knowledge of approaching separation.

She longed for her mate. Such beauty as lay before her was a torture without love. To love in the mountains in October! What joy! She thought of Mackenzie's eyes as he urged her, and her heart cried out for love.

Then she sang—with such poignancy as never before, Tosti's "Good-by, summer! Good-by, hope! Good-by, forever!" As she began the phrase, "What are we waiting for, O my love?" a man stepped out from behind a tree and stood silently before her.

"Malcolm!" Her voice rang joyously. With outstretched hands she ran to him, and he gathered her into his arms.

"I couldn't stay away from you, Linda! You told me not to write, but you didn't tell me not to follow you. Are you angry?"

A love-light softened her eyes. "No, dear, I'm too happy to be angry. All the pain has gone, now that you are here."

Hand in hand they wandered down through the woods and along a rolling country-road.

"I must show you my brook. I've brought a lunch, and we'll eat it in the woods. To-day we'll live only in the present and be happy." Her gaiety was infectious.

Their path turned down from the road. To reach the brook and the wood beyond, Mackenzie climbed down a boulder, Linda following. The descent which was easy to him made her pause. He turned and held out his arms.

"Let me lift you down, dear."

For a moment she faltered, then gave herself into his embrace. As her feet touched the ground, she felt his lips close over hers. Faintly she refused him; then, overcome by his warmth, she drank thirstily from his lips as if she could never be satisfied. Again and again he kissed her, until they seemed to melt into one glowing fire.

With a long sigh he released her, and gazed into her eyes.

"What heavenly bliss!" His eyes thrilled her with their intensity.

At the brook he caught her in his arms and stopped in mid-stream to kiss her. They laughed like children as he set her down on the opposite bank.

"We must eat luncheon Spanish fashion, first a sandwich, then a cigarette," she said.

"Ah! My favorite cigarettes! There isn't much to eat. I planned for one mouth only."

"You didn't count on kisses, which are food and drink to lovers."

"The only appetite that grows with feeding." She puffed a cigarette and breathed the smoke into his mouth in a kiss.

"I'm insatiable!" he whispered.

"So am I. I want more now."

He leaned his head on her breast. With his face between her hands, she kissed his forehead, his eyes, and his lips, tenderly, then with passionate ferocity. In ecstatic silence they clung together, as if eternal separation were imminent.

"Do you really love me, Malcolm?" She drew his head close to her bosom.

"I do indeed. I adore you. And you? Tell me that you love me!"

"With every fiber of my being."

"Will you come with me, Linda, and let me show you how I can love you?"

She started up with an exclamation of pain. "Don't tempt me! Don't, I beg of you. You're spoiling this perfect day



by making me think of the future."

Silently they walked through the swaying yellow birches to the brook, and again he carried her over. As he held her closely for one brief moment before setting her free, she flung her arms around his neck and clung to him convulsively. He lifted her to a rock above him. She faced him with her hands on his shoulders.

"Are you happy, dearest?" His voice was tremulous.

"In the seventh heaven."

"No, not the seventh. This is only the first. We shall reach the seventh by degrees."

They descended into the valley, through an aisle of flaming red and shimmering yellow, fragrant with the pungent odor of pines. Slowly the sun sank behind the purple mountains, leaving a golden glow through which shone

the steady light of the evening star.

"Our star of love," he whispered, as he drew her hand through his arm. "When you come to me, we shall live through every heaven. We will read and sing and love together, mounting higher and higher until we reach the highest peak of all, the supreme ecstasy of love."

Under the full moon he bade her good-by. "I shall wait for your answer in Boston. Write to me soon, and I'll meet you whenever you say."

IV

The next day came tumult of spirit. The spell of her hours with Mackenzie was upon her, numbing her power of thought. As in a dream she walked towards the pines, trying to forget the sweet intoxication of her temptation. Suddenly she stopped, as if detained by



A love-light softened her eyes.
 "No, dear, I'm too happy to be
 angry. All the pain is gone now
 that you are here. . . Come, I
 must show you my brook."

a hand on her shoulder. To the right was a small gray wooden church with open door, the only one in the village which gave invitation on a week-day.

She entered the bare, uncarpeted interior, with its uncompromisingly ugly bas-reliefs depicting the Passion, its garish colors and crude stained-glass, and walked down to the right of the altar before an image of the Christ flanked by alabaster vases filled with crimson wax roses. Lighting a taper in the row at the foot of the crucifix, she knelt and bowed her head in prayer.

In every idealist is a strong undercurrent of sentiment. In Linda Audenried, sentiment was fortified by deep religious feeling, inherited and trained.

She recalled her votive candle in the church in Paris when she made the decision to marry Beverley Audenried. She remembered his early devotion, when

he gave so generously and spent such effort to please, in the days when she did not feel his limitations. Essentially honest with herself, she realized that in marrying him, she had wanted luxury and devotion. While she had grown, mentally and spiritually, he had stood still; but until his business harassed him, he had played his part like a man. If he would only love her and confide in her, she could bear privation without murmur. With welling tears she saw him again as he lay asleep on the morning before she left him, his face on the pillow so startlingly like their dead baby's.

Gradually she grew calmer. A solemn peace seemed to fill the unlovely little church. For the last time she drew from the treasure-house of her heart its most precious jewel—the fire opal of unsatisfied love. Briefly she lived again through the joy of the perfect day with her

lover, dwelling on each sweet detail with sorrowful delight. Then in her heart of hearts she closed her secret forever. Her resolve was taken. And that evening she wrote a letter:

Dear Malcolm:

I can't do it! I must not leave Beverley. I don't understand what has come between us, but I do believe that the best years of my life should be given to the man who has spent

so much for my happiness. As long as he was able, he gave me every luxury.

We have had one perfect, golden day of love, you and I, with no aftermath of bitterness. I shall never forget it. I love you and I want inexpressibly to be with you. But I must go back to my husband. He needs me. Good-by!

Yours ever,
Linda.

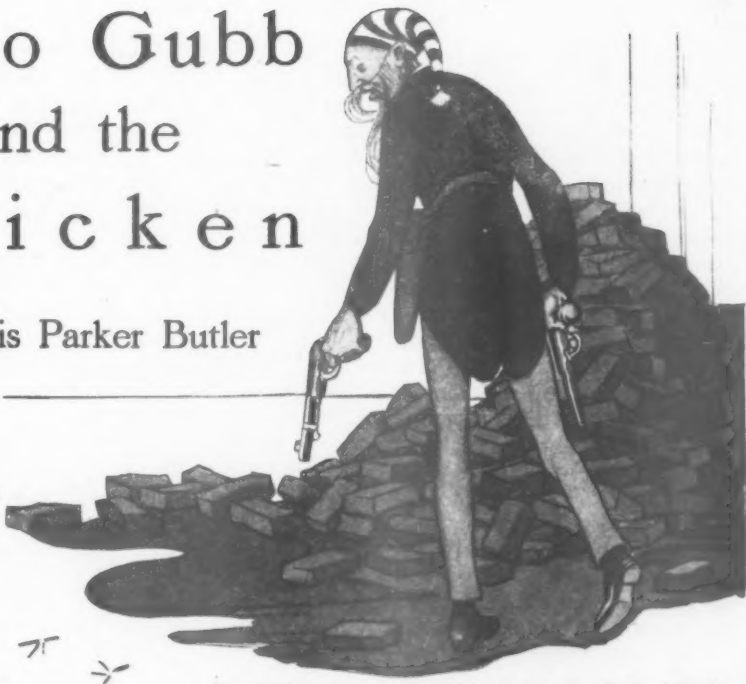


"I must go back to my husband. He needs me."

Philo Gubb and the Chicken

By Ellis Parker Butler

ILLUSTRATED
BY
REA IRVIN



For half an hour, Mr Gubb studied the field of battle.

ELLIS PARKER BUTLER'S name stands for the very best in humorous writing. It has been at the top of the list ever since he wrote his famous "Pigs is Pigs." He has never dealt with a more humorous character than his Philo Gubb, graduate of the twelve mail lessons of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting.

PHILO GUBB, with three rolls of wall paper under his arm and a pail of mixed paste in one hand, walked along Cherry Street near the brick-yard. He was going to one of Mr. Morford's "renting" houses which had just been let, where he was to hang paper in the hall, for during the dull periods of his detective business he slumped back into the decorating and painting line that had been his occupation before he "took" the Rising Sun Detective School's Correspondence Course of Detecting.

Just ahead of him, from the western side of the street, a short and rutty lane led, between Mrs. Smith's house and the Cherry Street Methodist Chapel, through to the brick-yard. The brick-yard itself lay behind the Chapel and a dozen of the small homes on Cherry Street, extending back to a small hill. The eastern

face of the small hill had been cut away as the clay had been removed for brick-making, leaving a steep clay-bank. Along the base of this lay wheel-barrows, and from it several lines of planks led to the kneading and crushing apparatus.

A pond some twenty feet wide and fifty feet long had been constructed by piling a wall of clay across and around a tiny stream of water that led through the brick-yard property, but this was well to the north, where the hill dipped down to a creek. Just back of the Cherry Street yards stood the kilns in which the brick were burned, and between these kilns and the clay bank and the pond were the broad, level, well-sanded drying-yards. Scattered over these yards were the long-handled scrapers or "lutes" used to level the surface of the yards, numbers of unburned brick half

crumbled by the rains, tables used in moulding the brick, and the moulds themselves. Around the kilns the ground was littered with "bats" or broken brick, and with the remains of the yard's supply of cord-wood.

The whole place had the cheap, unkempt appearance of a temporarily abandoned brick-yard, and the remnants of food and bits of clothing under the kiln shed told that it had been used by tramps as a shelter against bad weather at no distant date. Remains of a fire and numerous chicken feathers suggested that the tramps were not respecters of property.

And Mrs. Smith's chicken coop stood on the fence line between her property and the brick-yard!

Philo Gubb had passed Mrs. Smith's front gate and was opposite the brick-yard lane when Mrs. Smith waddled to her fence and hailed him.

"Oh, Mr. Gubb!" she panted. "Mr. Gubb!" And the correspondence school detective stopped and looked back. With his usual slow, stork-like movements he turned and walked back to the woman. She seemed much excited.

"You got to excuse me for speakin' to you when I don't know you," she said, "but I just took a chance of you being you. Long and lanky was what Mrs. Miffin said you was, and a paper-hanger by trade, and you looked like that to the life, so I made bold to holler at you. Mrs. Miffin says you're a detective."

"Detecting is my aim and my profession," said Mr. Gubb, "but when crime is slack I take up painting and decorating. Just now crime is about as slack as it gets. Seems like it has been a bad year for it, and decorating aint much better. So if you've got anything in either line, I've got time to 'tend to it."

"Well, I'm all decorated up," said Mrs. Smith, "but I want to ask a word of you about crime, if that's what you detectives call it. I call it plain meanness. I've had a chicken stole."

"Chicken stealing is a crime if ever there was one," said Philo Gubb seriously, "but there aint hardly enough of magnitude to it to make it worth while

to employ professional help. Not as a rule. I don't seem to recall when a detective was ever called in to detect about chicken stealing. A detective's time is valuable time, especially when he has gone and went and took a complete course off of a correspondence school in twelve lessons. A detective most generally works on diamond stealing crimes, and not on chicken stealings. How many chickens have you had stole?"

"One," said Mrs. Smith. "I've had 'em stole before, and plenty of 'em, but this time just one has been took, and that was took last night. I woke up about one o'clock last night and heard the squawk, and I would have gone out and rescued that chicken, only I'm a lone woman, and wrestling with a chicken-thief at one o'clock in the morning is no job for a lone woman. So I thought I'd hire you to catch that thief, if it don't cost too much."

"It's pretty hard to catch a thief that was around last night," said Philo Gubb. "Chicken thieves usually don't leave many clues, and clues are what us detectives have to go on. When it is diamonds that is stole, there is generally a wine glass left with some wine in it, and a winey finger-print on the jewel case, or something. But a finger-print in a chicken coop aint usually very distinct. What was the chicken worth?"

"Forty cents," said Mrs. Smith.

"Well, you see," said Philo Gubb, "if I was to spend a week or so on this case, and was to recover the property, it wouldn't hardly pay me. Forty cents aint much for a week's work, and like as not you'd hate to give me the whole forty. Maybe you'd only want to give me twenty cents. I aim to work for popular prices, but twenty cents a week is low. You've got to say it is low yourself."

"It aint much," admitted Mrs. Smith.

"No. You're right, it aint," said Philo Gubb. "And that'd be what I'd get if I recovered the chicken, and as like as not I wouldn't recover the chicken anyway. The chances are that by the time I shadowed whoever I happened to suspect, and trailed them, and hunted up clues and followed them, the chicken would be ett. A man don't steal a



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chicken to let it hang around and be a clue, because a live chicken is a mighty prominent clue. Of course a rooster is a worse clue to leave around than a hen is, because it crows and a hen don't—not usually. Was this a rooster or a hen?"

"It was a hen," said Mrs. Smith.

"Well, even so," said Mr. Gubb, "the chances are that that hen was somebody's dinner this noon, and if I took this case on commission—say, for half what the hen is worth—I wouldn't get nothing. It would be different if you was to offer a reward for the capture of the thief. A thief don't get ett that way. If you was to offer a reward of a hundred dollars for the capture of the thief—"

"Oh, my lands!" exclaimed Mrs. Smith. "One hundred dollars! And all my chickens in a bunch aint worth twenty dollars. Is that the ideas you detectives have of what your time is worth? It would be cheaper for me to pay somebody five dollars to come and steal the rest of the chickens."

"I don't hardly expect you to pay one hundred dollars," said Philo Gubb. "Not for catching a chicken thief. I only mentioned that sum off-hand. If crime was brisk I might want fifty dollars for a job like this, but seeing how trade is in that line, and that I could do my paper-hanging work by day and work on the detecting by night, I might cut the price."

"It seems to me," said Mrs. Smith,

"that if you had any gumption you ought to make the thief pay. I aint the one that did the crime, am I? So why should I pay? It's only right that a thief should pay for the time and trouble he put us to, aint it?"

"I never before looked at it that way," said Mr. Gubb thoughtfully, "but it stands to reason."

"Of course it does!" said Mrs. Smith. "And I'll be perfectly liberal with you. You catch that thief and scare him so he wont touch my chickens, and you get me my forty cents that that hen was worth, and you can offer yourself as much reward as you think you can make that thief pay. You can offer yourself a million dollars, if you want to. That's none of my business. It's your affair, that is."

"I'd ought to have fifty dollars," said Philo Gubb thoughtfully.

"Well, you can offer yourself fifty or more, for all I care," said Mrs. Smith. "All I want to know is, will you try to catch that thief, or wont you?"

"Well," said Philo Gubb, picking up his paste pail, "I guess if there aint any important murders or things turn up by seven to-night, I'll start in to work for that reward. I guess I can't ask more than five dollars reward. Five dollars or up. A man that steals chickens one by one this way aint a wholesale thief. He's a retail thief, and he can't pay much if he wants to."

"Then you'll go onto the job?" asked Mrs. Smith.

"Soon as I've had my supper," said Philo Gubb, and went his way.

At seven the evening was still light, and Philo Gubb, to cover his intentions and avert suspicion in case his interview with Mrs. Smith had been observed by the thief, put a false beard in his pocket and a revolver beside it and left Mrs. Murphy's "Rooms to let" cottage by the back way. He slipped through the alley gate, opening it the merest crack, and glided down the alley, keeping close to the stables that edged it. A detective must be cautious.

Mrs. Murphy's house was a full mile from Mrs. Smith's, but Philo Gubb chose a course calculated to avert the

suspicion of the most suspicious thief that ever trembled with alarm. He started down the alley in the opposite direction from Mrs. Smith's house. He followed the alley until it ended at the cemetery road, and before emerging from the alley there he changed his hat for a cap and put on a false mustache. He walked half a mile up the cemetery road and dodged behind a clump of bushes. Here he took off the false mustache and put on the full beard. Thus disguised, he turned to the north into Welker's lane and followed that country road until he knew he must be somewhere to the west of the brick-yard, and, keeping as well hidden by the occasional clumps of trees as he could, he turned eastward and walked through the intervening fields. He emerged from the last clump of trees to find himself, as he had hoped, on top of the small hill at the rear of the brick-yard, immediately above the clay-bank. The light was still sufficient to permit him to study the lay of the land, and he dropped on his stomach in the tall grass that came to the very edge of the bank, and studied the brick-yard.

Pond, drying floor, mixer, grinder, kilns, Mrs. Smith's chicken-coop and house, and the Methodist Chapel all lay below him, but the chapel and the chicken-coop were partially hidden by the kilns. For half an hour, until the light failed, Mr. Gubb studied the field of battle, and as he studied, it became evident that a chicken thief, even the most inexpert, could have wished no better scene for the commission of crime.

The abandoned kilns offered admirable seclusion while waiting for the auspicious moment. Twenty men could have lurked in their shadows unobserved by the sharpest eye. The kilns could be approached through the silent property of the Methodist Chapel, or by the bed of the creek, or through the fields, as Mr. Gubb had approached it. If alarmed while at work in the chicken-coop, the thief could take five steps and be safely hidden among the old kilns. He could dodge among them until he found an opportunity to glide away in the night. It would have required an army of fifty

men to cut off all avenues of escape from between the old kilns. Having made these observations, Philo Gubb slid down the clay bank, walked across the drying floor, and examined the kilns more closely.

A brick kiln is built entirely, or almost so, of the brick that are to be burned, and in a small yard, such as this, where the work is intermittent, and where the demand for brick is not steady, the kilns are torn down and carted away as the brick are sold. These kilns were about half dismantled. Great gaps had been razed out of the sides of some of them; piles of insufficiently burned or twisted brick lay here and there as high as a man's head; and the locality as a whole was ideal as a hiding place.

The permanent structure of the kilns was a mere roof of half inch planks laid on timbers that were upheld by poles, forming a loose gable. The planks of the roof were not nailed into place, but merely laid on the timbers, so that in case of rain they could be arranged to form a covering for the unbaked brick, but could be removed to permit the escape of smoke when the kilns were being fired. A ladder leaning against one of the poles gave access to the roof. In the darkness it was impossible for Philo Gubb to find a finger print of the culprit on the kilns, although he looked for one. He did not even find the usual and highly helpful button, torn from its place in the criminal's eagerness to depart. He found only an old horse-shoe and a broken tobacco pipe. As there were evidences that the pipe had been abandoned on that spot several years earlier, neither of these was a very valuable clue.

Mr. Gubb gave his attention to the chicken coop. It was pre-eminently a hand-made chicken coop of the rough-and-ready variety. If catalogued, it would have been mentioned as consisting of two sections—the coop proper and the chicken shed. The shed, in which the chickens were already at roost, was composed on two sides of the board fence, and on the other two sides of rough pine "rattlings," with the round sides out.

There was no window, but a door that had once been a house door. It still bore the shank of a door knob. Probably the china knob itself was now serving as a nest egg inside the coop. The coop was built of laths, set the width of a lath apart. On the north the fence formed the lower part of the coop, with a row of laths above. The other two sides were of two lengths of lath, one above the other. The only way to enter the coop was through the chicken house.

To the south of the chicken house, outside the fence, were a pile of empty tin cans—with the tomato variety in the majority—and several piles of wood ashes, and, as these indicated, there was a gate in the back fence but a few feet to the south of the chicken house. The gate was poorly secured by a small iron keg hoop, partly flattened and laid over the adjacent boards of the fence and gate. To enter the chicken house it was only necessary to lift the hoop, open the gate, take three steps to the door of the chicken house and turn the knobless shank of the door. The only difficult part of this was the turning of the knobless shank, and a mere child could have done that at the second or third trial.

Philo Gubb entered the chicken house and looked around, lighting his dark lantern and throwing its rays here and there that he might see better. The house was so low of roof that he had to stoop to avoid the roosts, and the tails of the chickens brushed his hat. It needed brushing, so this did no harm. The hens and the two roosters complained gently of this interruption of their beauty sleep, and moved along the roosts, and Mr. Gubb went outside again. It was quite evident that the thief had had no great hardships to undergo in robbing that roost. Unless he was a very tall thief indeed, and thus got a "crick" in the neck by stooping, there could have been nothing to cause him pain or anxiety. All he had to do was to enter the chicken house, choose a chicken, and walk away with it. He might have taken ten chickens as easily as one.

Why had he not taken ten chickens? Mr. Gubb, as he put the keg hoop over the end board of the gate, studied this.

There had been nothing here to prevent a wholesale depredation. The reason was elsewhere, and Mr. Gubb, before he could solve the mystery and capture the criminal, felt that he must decide this important question.

A man, entering a chicken coop for the purpose of theft, and finding many chickens, and then only taking one, must have had a reason. He might have been a tramp, wishing but one chicken because one would satisfy his present appetite, while ten would be cumbersome to carry about and be rather apt to excite suspicion. Philo's mind instantly reverted to the chicken feathers beside the remains of a fire in the kiln. This clue—leading trampward—he abandoned at once, because the feathers were white, while Mrs. Smith's chickens were all Plymouth Rocks.

A second tenable theory was that the thief, a man of normal honesty, and perhaps of African race, might have learned, in a period of financial depression, that the colored bishop was to take dinner at his shanty the next day, and might have taken the chicken for that purpose, quieting his conscience by thinking that it was all for a good cause, and that he would only borrow the chicken after all. This theory Mr. Gubb put aside after considering the normal appetites of colored bishops and their

hospitable parishioners—if that is the word. More than one chicken would have gone into the pot to furnish the ecclesiastical fricassee.

The third theory, which Mr. Gubb adopted, was that the thief, coming for a raid on the coop, had been surprised to find it so poorly guarded. It had been

so easy to enter the coop and steal the chicken that he had decided it would be folly to take eight or ten chickens and thus arouse instant suspicion and reprisal. Instead of this he had taken but one, trusting that the loss of one would be unnoticed or laid to rats or cats or weasels. Thus he would be able to return again and again as fowl meat was needed or desired, and the chickens would be like money in the bank—a fund on which to draw. This theory was so sound that Mr. Gubb believed it would require nothing more than patience to capture the criminal. The thief would come back for more chickens!



Philo Gubb looked around for an advantageous position in which to await the coming of the thief.

Philo Gubb looked around for an advantageous

position in which to await the coming of the thief, and be unseen himself, and the loose board roof of the brick kiln met his eye. No position could be better. He climbed the ladder inside the kiln, pushed one of the boards aside enough to permit him to squeeze through onto the roof, and creeping carefully over the loose boards, reached the edge

of the roof. Here he stretched himself out flat on the boards, and waited.

Nothing—absolutely nothing—happened! The mosquitoes, numerous indeed because of the nearness of the pond, buzzed around his head and stung him on the neck and hands, but he did not dare slap at them lest he betray his hiding-place. Hour followed hour and no chicken thief appeared. And when the first rays of the sun lighted the east he climbed down and stalked stiffly away to a short hour of sleep.

The next night the correspondence school detective wasted no time in preliminary observations of the lay of the land. He kept out of sight until the sun had set and dusk covered the land with shade, and then he went at once to the roof of the brick kiln. This time he was disguised in a red mustache, a pair of flowing white side-whiskers, and a woolen cap. And he wore two revolvers—large ones—in a belt about his waist.

It was still too early for brisk business in chicken stealing when Philo Gubb climbed to the roof of the kiln and spread himself out there, and he felt that he had time for a few minutes' sleep.

He was tremendously sleepy. Sleep fairly pushed his eyelids down over his eyes, and he put his crooked arm under his head and went to sleep so suddenly that it was like falling off a cliff into dreamland. He dreamed, uneasily, of having been captured by an array of forty chicken thieves, of having been led in triumph before the Supreme Court of the United States, and of having been condemned as a Detective Trust on the charge of acting in restraint of trade—as injuring the Chicken Stealers' Association's business—and required to dissolve himself.

The dream was agonizing as he tried one dissolvent after another without success. Turpentine merely dissolved his skin; alcohol had no effect whatever. He imagined himself in a long room in which stood vast rows of vats bearing different labels, and in and out of these he climbed, trying to obey the order of the court, but nothing seemed capable of dissolving him, and he suddenly dis-

covered that he was made of rubber. He seemed to remember that rubber was soluble in benzine, and he started on a tour of the vats, trying to find a benzine vat.

He walked many miles. Sometimes he arose in the air, with ease and grace, and flew a few miles. Finally he found the vat of benzine, immersed himself in it, and began to dissolve calmly and with a blessed sense of having done his duty.

It was then that Philo Gubb entered the dreamless sleep of the utterly weary, and, about the same time, two men slunk under the roof of the brick kiln and after looking carefully around took seats on the fallen bricks, resting their backs against the partly demolished kiln. They arranged the bricks as comfortably as possible before seating themselves, and when they were seated one of them drew a whiskey bottle from his pocket and after taking a good swig offered it to his partner.

"Nope!" said he. "I'm going to steer clear of that stuff until I know where I'm at, and you're fool for not doing the same, Wixy. First thing you know you'll be soused, and if you are, and anything turns up, what'll I do? I got all I can do to take care of you sober."

"Ah, turn up! What's goin' to turn up 'way out here?" asked Wixy. "They aint nobody follerin' us anyway. That's just a notion you got. Your nerves has gone back on you, Sandlot."

"My nerve is all right, and don't you worry about that," said Sandlot. "I've got plenty of nerve so I don't have to brace it up with booze, and you aint. That's what's the matter with you. You saw that feller as well as I did. Didn't you see him at Bureau?"

"That feller with the white whiskers?"

"Yes, him. And didn't you see him again at Derlingport? Well, what was he follerin' us that way for when he told us at Joliet he was goin' East?"

"A tramp has as good a right to change his mind as what we have," said Wixy. "Didn't we tell him we was goin' East ourselves? Maybe he aint lookin' for steady company any more than we

be. Maybe he come this way to get away from us, like we did to get away from— from— Sandlot," he said almost pleadingly, "you don't really think old White-whiskers was a-trailin' us, do you? You aint got a notion he's a detective?"

"How do I know what he is?" asked Sandlot. "All I know is that when I see a feller like that once, and then again, and he looks like he was tryin' to keep hid from us, I want to shake him off. I know that. And I know I'm goin' to shake him off. And I know that if you get all boozed up, and full of liquor, and can't walk, and that feller shows up, I'm a-going to quit you and look out for myself. When a feller steals something, or any little harmless thing like that, it's different. He can afford to stick to a pal, even if he gets nabbed. But when it's a case of—"

"Now don't use that word!" said Wixy angrily. "It wasn't no more murder than nothing. Was we going to let Chicago Chicken bash our heads in just because we stood up for our rights? Him wantin' a full half just because he put us onto the job! He'd ought to been killed for askin' such a thing."

"Well, he was, wasn't he?" asked Sandlot. "You killed him all right. It was you swung on him with the rock, Wixy, remember that!"

"Tryin' to put it off on me, aint you!" said Wixy angrily. "Well, you can't do it. If I hang, you hang. Maybe I did take a rock to him, but you had him strangled to death before I ever hit him."

"What's the use gabbin' about it?" said Sandlot. "He's dead, and we made our get-away, and all we got to do is to keep got away. There aint anybody ever going to find him, not where we sunk him in that deep water."

"Aint I been sayin' that right along?" asked Wixy. "Aint I been tellin' you you was a fool to be scared of an old feller like White Whiskers? Cuttin' across country this way when we might as well be forty miles more down the Rock Island, travelin' along as nice as you please in a box car."

"Now, look here!" said Sandlot menacingly. "I aint goin' to take no abuse from you, drunk or sober. If you don't

like my way, you go back to the railroad and leave me go my own way. I'm goin' on across country until I come to another railroad, I am. And if I come to a river, and I run across a boat, I'm goin' to take that boat and float a ways. When I says nobody is going to know anything about what we did to the Chicken, over there in Chicago, I mean it. Nobody is. But didn't Sal know all three of us was goin' out on that job that night? And when the Chicken don't come back, aint she goin' to guess something happened to the Chicken?"

"She's goin' to think he made a rich haul, like he did, and that he up and quit her," said Wixy. "That's what she'll think."

"And what if she does?" said Sandlot. "She and him has been boardin' with Mother Smith, aint they? Aint Mother Smith been handin' the Chicken money when he needed it, because he said he was workin' up this job with us? I bet the Chicken owes Mother Smith a hundred dollars, and when he don't come back, then what? Sal will say she aint got no money because the Chicken quit her, and Mother Smith will—"

"Well, what?" asked Wixy.

"She'll send word to every crook in the country to spot the Chicken, and you know it. And when word comes back that there aint no trace of him—"

"You've lost your nerve, that's what ails you," said Wixy scornfully.

"No I aint," Sandlot insisted. "I've heard plenty of fellers tell how Mother Smith keeps tabs on anybody that tries to do her out of ten cents even. Why, maybe the Chicken promised to come back that night and pay up. I bet he did! And I bet he *was* sour on Sal. And I bet Mother Smith knew it all the time, and that when he didn't come back that night she sent out word to spot him or us. I bet you!"

"You've lost your nerve!" said Wixy, drunkenly. "You never did have no nerve. You're so scared you're seein' ghosts."

"All right!" said Sandlot, rising. "I'll see ghosts, then. But I'll see them by myself. You can go—"

"Goo'-by!" said Wixy, carelessly, and

finished the last drop in his bottle. "Goo'-by, ol' Sandlot! Goo'-by!"

Sandlot hesitated a moment and then arose and, after a parting glance at Wixy, struck out across the drying floor of the brick-yard, and was lost in the darkness. Wixy blinked and balanced the empty bottle in his hand.

"He's afraid!" he boasted to himself. "He's coward. 'Fraid of dark. 'Fraid of ghosts. Los' his nerve. I ain' 'fraid."

He arose to his feet unsteadily.

"Sandlot's coward!" he said, and threw down the empty bottle with a motion of disgust at the cowardice of Sandlot. The bottle burst with a jangling of glass.

On the loose board roof Philo Gubb raised his head suddenly. For an instant he imagined he was a disembodied spirit, his body having been dissolved in gasoline, but as he became wider awake he was conscious of a noise beneath him. Wixy was shifting twenty or thirty bricks that had fallen from the kiln upon a truss of straw, used the last winter to cover new moulded bricks to protect them from the frost against their drying. He was preparing a bed. He muttered to himself as he worked, and Philo Gubb, placing his eye to a crack between the boards of the roof, tried to observe him. The darkness was so absolute he could see nothing whatever.

He heard Wixy stretch out on the straw, and in a minute more he heard the heavy breathing of a sleeper. Wixy was not letting any cowardice disturb his repose, at all events, and Philo Gubb considered how he could best get himself off the roof.

The sleeping man was immediately beneath him; the ladder was a full ten yards away; every motion made the loose boards complain. Looking down, Mr. Gubb saw that the top of the kiln reached within a few feet of where he lay, and that the partially removed sides had left a series of giant steps.

Mr. Gubb loosened his pistols in his belt. Now that he had the chicken thief so near, he meant to capture him. With the utmost care he slid one of the boards of the roof aside and put his long legs into the opening thus made, feeling for

the kiln until he touched it, and when he had a firm footing on it he lowered the upper part of his body through the roof.

Five feet away a cross timber reached from one pillar of the roof to another, and just below that was one of the steps of the kiln. Philo Gubb lighted his dark lantern, and casting its ray, saw this cross piece. If he could jump and reach it he could drop to the lower step and avoid the danger of bringing the side of the kiln down with him. He slipped the lantern into his pocket, reached out his hands, and jumped into the dark.

For an instant his fingers grappled with the cross piece; he struggled to gain a firmer hold; and then he dropped straight upon the sleeping Wixy. He alighted fair and square on the murderer's stomach, and the air went out of Wixy in a sudden *whoof*.

Philo Gubb, in the unreasoning excitement of the moment, grappled with Wixy, but the unresistance of the man told that he was unconscious, and the correspondence school detective released him and stood up. He uncovered the lens of his dark lantern and turned the ray on Wixy.

The murderer lay flat on his back, his eyes closed and his mouth open. Mr. Gubb put his hand on Wixy's heart. It still beat! the man was not dead!

With the dark lantern in one hand and a rusty tin can in the other, Mr. Gubb hurried to the pond and returned with the can full of water, but even in this crisis he did not act thoughtlessly. He set the dark lantern on a shelf of the kiln, so that its rays might illuminate Wixy and himself alike, drew one of his pistols and pointed it full at Wixy's head, and holding it so, he dashed the can of water in the face of the unconscious man. Wixy moved uneasily. He emitted a long sigh and opened his eyes.

"I got you!" said Philo Gubb sternly. "There aint no use to make a move, because if you do I'll shoot this pistol at you. If you're able so to do, just put up your hands."

Wixy blinked in the strong light of the lantern. He groaned and placed one of his hands on his stomach.

"Put 'em up!" said Philo Gubb, and

with another groan Wixy raised his hands. He was still flat on his back. He looked as if he were doing some sort of health exercise. In a minute the hands fell to the ground.

"I guess you'd better set up," said Philo Gubb. "You aint goin' to be able to hold up your hands if you lay down that way." As he helped Wixy to a sitting position, he kept his pistol against the fellow's head.

"Now then," said Philo Gubb, when

paler when Philo Gubb mentioned the chicken.

"I never killed the Chicken!" he almost shouted. "I never did it!"

"I don't care whether you killed the chicken or not," said Philo Gubb calmly. "The chicken is gone, and I reckon that's the end of the chicken. But Mrs. Smith has got to be paid."

"Did she send you?" asked Wixy, trembling. "Did Mother Smith put you onto me?"



"I got you," said Philo Gubb sternly

he had arranged his captive to suit his taste, "what you got to say?"

"I got to say I never done what you think I done, whatever it is," said Wixy. "I don't know what it is, but I never done it. Some other feller done it."

"That don't bother me none," said Philo Gubb. "If you didn't do it, I don't know who did. Just about the best thing you can do is to pay for the chicken and pay my expenses of getting you, and you'll be better off."

Pale as Wixy was, he turned still

"She did so," said the correspondence school detective. "And you can pay up or go to jail. How'd you like that?"

Wixy studied the tall detective.

"Look here," he said. "S'pose I give you fifty and we call it square." He meant fifty dollars.

"Maybe that would satisfy Mrs. Smith," said Philo Gubb, thinking of fifty cents, "but it don't satisfy me. My time's valuable and it's got to be paid for. Ten times fifty aint a bit too much, and if it had took longer I'd have asked

more. If you want to give that much, all right. And if you don't, all right too."

Wixy studied the face of Philo Gubb carefully. There was no sign of mercy in the bird-like face of the paper-hanger-detective. Indeed, his face was severe. It was relentless in its sternness. Five dollars was little enough to ask for two nights of first-class correspondence school detective work. Rather than take less he would lead the chicken-thief to jail. And Wixy, with his third, and half of the Chicken's third, of the proceeds of the criminal job that had led to the death of the Chicken, knowing the relentlessness of Mother Smith, that female *Fagin* of Chicago, considered that he would be doing well to purchase his freedom for five hundred dollars.

"All right, pal," he said suddenly. "You're on. It's a bet. Here you are."

He slipped his hand into his pocket and drew out a great roll of money. With the muzzle of Philo Gubb's pistol hovering just out of reach before him, he counted out five crisp one hundred dollar bills. He held them out with a sickly grin. Philo Gubb took them and looked at them, puzzled.

"What's this for?" he asked, and Wixy suddenly blazed forth in anger.

"Now, don't come any of that!" he cried. "A bargain is a bargain. Don't you come a-pretendin' you didn't say you'd take five hundred, and try to get more out of me! I won't give you no more—I won't! You can jug me, if you want to. You can't prove nothing on me, and you know it. Have you found the Chicken? Well, you got to have the corpus what-you-call-it, aint you? Huh? Aint five hundred enough? I bet the Chicken never cost Mother Smith more than a hundred and fifty—"

"I was only thinkin'—" began Philo Gubb.

"Don't think, then," said Wixy.

"Five hundred dollars seemed too—"

Philo began again. "It's all you'll get, if I hang for it," said Wixy firmly. "You can give Mother Smith what you want, and keep what you want. That's all you'll get."

Philo Gubb could not understand it.

He tried to, but he could not understand it at all. And then suddenly a great light dawned in his brain. There was something this chicken-thief knew that he and Mrs. Smith did not know. The stolen chicken must have been of some rare and much sought strain. So it was all right. The thief was paying what the chicken was worth, and not what Mrs. Smith thought it was worth in her ignorance. He slipped the money into his pocket.

"All right," he said. "I'm satisfied if you are. I guess the chicken was a fancy bird, aint it so?"

"The Chicken was a tough old rooster, that's what he was," said Wixy, staggering to his feet.

"I thought he was a hen," said Philo Gubb. "Mrs. Smith said he was a hen."

Wixy laughed a sickly laugh.

"Always havin' your joke, aint you. But that aint much of a joke. That's why everybody called him Chicken, because his first name was Hen."

Philo Gubb's mouth fell open. He was convinced now that he had to do with an insane man. Wixy moved toward the open drying floor.

"Well, so 'long, Pard," he said to Philo Gubb. "Give my regards to Mother Smith. And say," he added, "if you see Sal, don't let her know what happened to the Chicken. Don't say anybody made away with the Chicken, see? Tell Sal the Chicken flew the coop himself and went down to New Orleans to play the races, see?"

"Who is Sal?" asked Philo Gubb.

"You ask Mother Smith," said Wixy. "She'll tell you." And he went out into the dark. Philo Gubb heard him shuffle across the drying floor, and when the sound had died away in the distance he put up his revolver.

"Five hundred dollars!" he said, and he routed Mrs. Smith out of bed. He did not tell her the amount of reward he had made the chicken thief pay. He asked her what the most expensive chicken in the world might be worth, and she reluctantly accepted ten dollars. Then he asked her who Sal was.

But Mrs. Smith could not tell him.

A Slice of Broad- way

By W. Carey
Wonderly

Author of "The Tin-Pan Girlie," etc.



The first
time he took
her to sup-
per, he ex-
plained.

ILLUSTRATED BY COYLE CHRISTY TINCHER

"IT'S not New York; it's not Broadway. It's what the folks in the Hinterland think Broadway is like. New Yorkers know better. For that reason alone, it'll make you a rich man." That size-up of Dalton's play by Pam, the chorus girl, epitomizes the biggest difference between this story and others you've read. For this is the story of Broadway as the Broadway people know it, *not as others think it ought to be*. The story stamps Mr. Wonderly as a worthy member of our All-Star list of writers.

ON the third morning, after listening at the door for several minutes, Pam crossed the narrow hallway and entered the tiny bed-room opposite, without the formality of knocking.

"Hello!" cried she. "Got an egg that's not signed-up?"

The man lying on the single iron bed opened his eyes and made an attempt to sit up.

"Mrs. Diddie—" he said.

"It isn't; it's me," said Pam.

She came into the room and stood at the foot of the bed looking down at the red-cheeked, bright-eyed boy who tossed feverishly on the hot pillows. And she saw the untidy room with the one win-

dow through which the July sun now streamed unchecked by curtain or awning.

"You're—the girl across the hall," said Dalton, and his glance seemed to scorch her flesh. "I'm sorry—to have you find me like this; I'm sort of under the weather."

Pam nodded even while a feeling of helplessness stole over her.

"Look here, old man," she said gently, "what's up? Why, you're ill! A blind person can see that. How about the doctor and his little black bag? Who's looking out for you? Not Diddie?"

The boy closed his eyes as the hot sunlight fell upon his face.

"I'll be all right in a day or so," he

said. "You're very kind, but—the doctor says I'll be as good as new in a little while now, thanks."

"H'm. Who's the quack?" asked Pam.

"Er—his name?"

"Yes."

"Smith—Doctor Smith," replied Dalton, without opening his tired eyes.

She made a quick, significant gesture with thumb and forefinger.

"Seems like I've heard that name before," she mused. "Had breakfast?"

This time he opened his eyes.

"Long ago!" he told her.

Pam looked at the man and frowned. Then swiftly, without a word, she turned on her heel and left the room. Across the hall she entered her own meager quarters and began a hurried search in trunk and closet. Two skirts, a dark and a light one, and a white nainsook kimono she found, and tore back to Dalton with them under her arm.

Holding up the kimono, she said in a matter of fact way:

"Do you think, if I helped you, you could get into this? It's cool and fresh and your pajama jacket's damp with perspiration. And this old blue skirt—I thought it'd do for a curtain; the sun's awful hot these mornings. And this white skirt, you can use for a pillow-slip. Aint I the little housewife?"

He looked at her gratefully when she had draped the window and put the other dress under his head. He felt better too; the glare of the sun had almost crazed him and he could only lie there and make no effort to shut it out. Now the room seemed almost cool; he believed he could sleep now.

"I'll see if I can scare up some sheets during the day," Pam nodded; then she disappeared through the door again, and he was alone.

On the floor below—third floor, front—lived Daisy Meadows. Like Pam, Daisy was a chorus girl, but right there all resemblance stopped, for it was whispered about that Miss Meadows paid her board regularly, in mid-summer, mind you, which could only mean, as everybody knows, ready money. And at Madam Diddie's, in July, money was as

scarce as radium. In fact, most of her guests had forgotten the stamp on anything larger than a nickel. For the last three weeks now, when the landlady had presented her bill to the Dutch comedian—second floor back—he had barked like a dog and wagged his ears; but Daisy was thrifty.

Pam knew this and she knew Daisy, so she knuckled sharply on her door and waited impatiently until Miss Meadows got out of bed and admitted her. For it was ridiculously early—just eleven o'clock.

"Oh," cried Daisy, when she saw her visitor, "I thought it was—I thought it was—"

"Yes, you thought it was Santa Claus with a pack o' fire-crackers," nodded Pam, pushing past her and closing the door. "Meadows, I want you to lend me a V. It's not for myself; I wouldn't ask you for myself."

"Of course not, Reddy," murmured Daisy; "you want it for Santa Claus, don't you?"

Pam grinned in spite of herself.

"I want it for— Say, you remember that boy who came here about a month ago from the Hinterland? Well, he's in that hole across from me, and he's sick, Meadows—without doctor and without money. You know how I'm fixed; I'd think I was Mr. Morgan's better half if I found a quarter hid away in an old sock. Everybody else in the house is pretty much in the same boat, but you—that's why I came here. I'll pay you back, with interest, just as soon as I land something. Will you?"

Daisy sat in the middle of the bed and hugged her knees up under her chin. She was a mite of a girl, all gold curls, blue eyes, and pink cheeks, and she spoke with a slight lisp, very soft and shy, which she considered most refined.

"You mean Frank Dalton?" she asked, and yawned openly, for she didn't waste her accomplishments on mere females.

"Yes," said Pam, and she secretly wondered how Daisy remembered his given name, which she couldn't recall ever having heard.

"He writes plays," shrugged Miss

Meadows, polishing the nails of one hand on the palm of the other. "You know, Reddy, I'm not eager to start a foundling home. If he'd stayed at hay-making now and left the play-making to Gus Thomas—see? I'm sorry, Reddy, but it's only because I'm a saving soul that I've got a little money put by. If I lend to every poet and tenor and—"

"Make it two, Meadows; I'll settle with you directly I get something," interrupted Pam. "Understand, I'm not asking for myself—"

Daisy slid off the bed and went to the bureau. Unlocking the top drawer, she took out three frayed one-dollar bills and held them up with a wry face.

"Two," said Pam, kicking over a chair in her eagerness to get to them. "The boy's as sick as a dog, Meadows, and I've got a hunch that he's been trying to live on bananas and rolls. You'll get this—first penny I earn, all right."

Daisy looked at Pam with a funny little side glance, and suddenly she burst out laughing.

"It wasn't quite fair; struck you below the belt, didn't it, Reddy?" she said. "Well, those who fall last fall the hardest. A poet!" She shrugged her shoulders. "It's your funeral—not mine."

Pam, with the two one-dollar bills clutched tightly in her fist, turned at the door and shot the other a contemptuous look.

"Didn't I tell you he was sick—sick as a dog!" cried she. There was indignation in her voice and it cut like a whip. "He can't hold his head up; have some sense, Meadows. Oh, I know; here's a whole houseful pretty much in the same boat—penniless and half-dead with the heat—but we're different. Dalton—that boy—came from a farm, from a mother who looked after his socks and told him when to change his flannels—you know—that kind! The game's new to him and if somebody don't lend him a hand now he's down, he won't be here to say 'How-d'ye-do' to Jack Frost when he returns to town."

In spite of her frankness, the evident sincerity in her voice and manner, Daisy only smiled.

"Then if you're not in love with him,

of course, you won't mind if I look in and see if I can do anything for the poor kid," she said.

"Why should I?" cried Pam. "Sure, come up!"

Miss Meadows seemed a bit taken aback at this.

"Reddy, honest, why are you doing this for that fellow?" she demanded. "If he's nothing to you—"

"He's this much to me, Daisy," said Pam then, with half-closed eyes. "A few years ago—oh, forget the exact number!—I came to this burg from up-state, and the hay-seed was in my hair and the mud thick on my heels. Nobody gave a darn what became of me, but then I am made of sterner stuff, and I couldn't remember my mother. You ought to know the feeling—you came from the Hinterland, Meadows. We can't let this boy die—"

"And Haverton?" asked Daisy in almost a whisper.

Pam shook her head and flung wide the door.

"I'm going to Clermont with him to-night—in a little tub-dress and a last year's hat. Which reminds me that I've got to get upstairs and bathe my white stockings. Thanks for the deuce—you'll get it the minute I lay my fingers to my first pay envelope."

Daisy followed her out in the hall, still bare-footed and with a soiled kimono wrapped carelessly around her.

"If you want gloves or stockings or anything to wear to-night—" she said, with a little nod.

"Thanks, I'm all right," returned Pam.

There was a brief silence during which the two girls watched each other almost breathlessly.

"Paul Haverton's a good sort," said Daisy.

"Ye-es, I believe he is."

"No—no encumbrances."

Pam swallowed hard, then nodded.

"We're going to do a roof to-night," volunteered Miss Meadows. "And when I get my war paint on—maybe I'm not some beautiful doll, Reddy. There's nothing comes out o' Fifth Avenue got anything on Daisy Dimples. And I live



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in a Fifty-second Street joint that smells of Irish stew two blocks off. . . . I could have my own apartment on Riverside, you know."

Pam laughed, and it seemed to break the spell, for the alien expression left her eyes and she began to whistle softly.

"Any girl can have that, Meadows," she said drily. "It's more unique nowadays to live at Madam Diddie's than on Riverside. How do you dry your stockings, eh?"

"I don't," replied Daisy, with a sweet smile, and she went back to her room, dragging her soiled garments after her.

Just at first those two greasy one-dollar bills seemed like a small fortune to Pam. She planned to get a doctor, and medicine. Then she counted the money again, changed it into nickels and dimes, and the smallness of it almost took her breath away. Milk and ice—that was what the boy needed most, and how much milk and ice will two dollars, eight quarters, twenty dimes, forty nickels, buy in New York? Not a penny did Dalton possess himself.

Of course he owed Madam Diddie room-rent, but then everybody in the house did, with the exception of Daisy Meadows; and Daisy, her only prompt lodger, if the truth be known, the excellent landlady liked the least of any of her "guests." Pam was in debt to her to the tune of twenty dollars, but Pam would pay some day—they all would, including the comedian who barked like a dog when approached for money, and demanded if it was the name of a new brand of cigarettes. Yes, Madam could be coaxed to wait for her board, Pam knew, and the two dollars, with care, would buy ice and milk for ten days; the real problem was food.

It was here that Paul Haverton proved his worth. It happened that Haverton was the friend of a friend of a friend of Pam's, which had made it perfectly all right for him to introduce himself in the first place. He had explained this friendship to her the first time he invited her to supper, the invitation and explanation being wrapped around the stems of a box of American beauties

which reached Pam by way of the stage door. Pam, being a perfectly normal girl, saw at a glance the correctness of the whole proceeding, and accepted—after making sure he was *the* Paul Haverton.

They had known each other now for nearly five months, and he still invited her to supper and she still accepted, wearing a tub suit and her last summer's hat. Once, coming back from Clermont, he had threatened to throw this same offending hat into the Hudson, to which she had replied that if he did, he would have to jump in after it—she was especially fond of that particular hat. And there was something in her eyes which made him glad to laugh away the incident.

When Pam's show closed in May, she found that she had saved no money but was free of debt; and she believed, quite firmly too, that she would experience no trouble getting work in a summer *révue*. But somehow she never made connections; nobody knows why.

Once—and only once—in these days, Haverton had sent her a single American Beauty with a hundred-dollar bill wrapped around its stem. Pam made the discovery only after the messenger had gone, but this didn't deter her in the least. She called the boy back again, gave him the money in Haverton's name, secured a receipt for it and sent it to him, collect. After that came only flowers and fruits, and occasionally champagne—such things as he'd send to Miss Fifth Avenue, decided Pam triumphantly.

Just at first, Frank Dalton lived pretty much off of Haverton's fruits. These, with the ice and milk, coaxed the life back in the thin body, for it was hunger and heat, just that, which had taken the very heart and soul out of him. He got well slowly, and he was very weak, much weaker than Pam had ever known a man could be.

Shortly she saw that he needed more nourishing foods and then it became a problem how to provide them. Pam herself breakfasted on peaches and melon, and since she went out to supper with Haverton almost every night, she sel-

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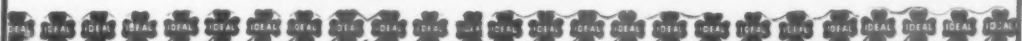
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dom went to bed hungry. But the boy—She went to Daisy; it was like pulling eye-teeth, she confessed to herself afterwards, but she got another dollar. When this was spent—and how many chops and steaks can you buy for a dollar in New York?—she hit upon a perfectly splendid scheme.

Or, rather, Daisy had told her of it months before, and she had only just reached that point where she cared to sample it. Haverton, whenever she went with him to supper or to theatre, was in the habit of slipping her some change to give to the girls in charge of the cloak rooms. And—it was very simple, very—Pam formed the habit of feeling the attendants just half of what he had given her for that purpose and pocketing the rest. Then Dalton had a chop for his dinner the next day; indeed, once, when Pam and Haverton spent an afternoon and evening at Brighton Beach, the boy was surprised with a squab on toast.

About the time Dalton was strong enough to sit huddled up in a chair at the window, Daisy Meadows began to remain at home in the evenings. Also her rent was overdue—two weeks. It was one hot, sultry night in August that she suddenly remembered the invalid and went upstairs to see him.

Dalton knew she was an angel the moment he saw her—gold curls and blue eyes affect most men that way; with women it is just the opposite—strange! Daisy wore a little French dress, almost infantile in design, and a bunch of silk marguerites, and her lisp was in perfect working order.

After the cunningest introduction, on Daisy's part, they sat there in the moonlight, the boy in the chair, she on the window-sill, and after a while she made him a glass of lemonade, and later still she sang to him—in a weak, pretty voice.

"It's terribly odd Pam has never told you about me," she said, when she rose to go.

Dalton could only smile and shake his head.

"'Cause, you know, we're such dear friends," added Miss Meadows. "I think Pam is the sweetest old thing!"

The boy nodded.

"You'll come again?" he begged eagerly.

"If you weally wish it. Are you sure you do? I wont give you a welapse with my foolishness—sure?" she cooed, shaking her curls at him.

He replied that he wanted her to come again very, very much, and he made an attempt to rise from his chair—whereupon she ran to him and forced him back in it again, allowing her hands to rest upon his shoulders for a full minute before she jerked them away with a guilty start.

"Good-night," she said then, with a childish bob of her head and backing out of the room.

"Don't go yet; it's early. Talk to me, tell me something," he pleaded. "If you knew how tired I am of being here in this beastly place—"

She came over, and sitting down on the edge of a chair, folded her hands in her lap.

"What shall I talk about?" she lisped.

"Yourself," he said boldly. "Are you an actress too?"

She sighed.

"Yes; and it's a very hard life for a girl who was raised as I was. Not that I'm complaining—oh, no! You see, after my father—Daddy; I always called him Daddy—after he, he died. Maw—Mumsey, she and my little sister—"

"I understand," he cried out, as her voice broke and died away in a choking sob.

"But it's not so bad it mightn't be worse," she said bravely, a moment later. "I was fortunate in getting a job—an engagement with Mr. Frohman. And working for C. F. is so—so satisfying and comfortable—like being born in Virginia and having pearls for your birthstone. Of course I'm just a little amateur yet, and if—if Daddy had lived I'd have gone to Paree to have my voice cultivated and all. Still, I hope and trust I'll succeed, if only for Mumsey's sake."

Dalton swallowed hard.

"You brave little soul!" he muttered.

But it was getting late, and Miss Meadows had no desire for Pam to find her there when she came in from Clermont. Yes, this time she must go—what



The Merger of East and West

*"But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!"*

—KIPLING.

In the "Ballad of East and West," Kipling tells the story of an Indian border bandit pursued to his hiding place in the hills by an English colonel's son.

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"It's terribly odd Pam never told you about me," she said.

would dear old Mrs. Diddie say if she knew her guests were visiting so late! Yes, if he wished it, weally truly, she would come to-morrow night and sit with him for a little while.

Dalton was still sitting there in the chair at the window when Pam returned, long after midnight. She came upstairs humming softly, and he closed his eyes, feigning sleep—his brain was awlirl with the sweetness of gold hair and blue eyes.

"Well, old man!" she cried, not too loudly, stopping at his door.

He didn't answer, and she peeped in, finding him there in the chair. Her heart must have stopped beating for that second it took her to get to him; but his hands were warm; he was breathing!

"Dal!" she said softly.

He looked up then, and smiled and rubbed his eyes, as if just awaking.

"How's tricks?" she asked, smiling back. "Want anything? Shall I fix you a lemonade? Look!" She opened her

silver mesh-bag and produced a fat lemon. "I sneaked that at Weber's when no one was watching. Now you know, old man, it's no trouble. And I'm a lady o' leisure—nothing to do to-morrow but amuse myself."

"Never mind, thanks; not to-night, I think," he said.

For a moment she was silent, trying to hide the disappointment she felt,—she always made Dal a glass of lemonade, every night! She had risked taking the lemon in the restaurant because she wasn't sure there were any at home. She looked at it in her hand, frowned, and then went towards her own room, humming again.

"Good-night. I'll leave my door open,—it'll let what air there is circulate. If you want anything, call," said she cheerily.

That he was still quite weak and very white at the end of a month worried Pam more than she fully realized. All the time now she was thinking, planning,



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dreaming, of getting him away to the country. Once she suggested writing to his mother, but Dalton refused point-blank; he was able to paddle his own canoe, he declared. Still, the country haunted her; that was what he needed most—country, fresh air. When he grew stronger he could sit in Central Park, but now—A trip on one of the Coney excursion boats might be had for a quarter. And there was Haverton's automobile.

Pam wondered if he would consent to take Dalton for a spin, occasionally, once or twice a week, if she told him. Or would Haverton understand? He was unreasonable—at times. And if she quarreled with him—Nevertheless, she determined to speak to him about the boy, the first chance she got—some time when he was feeling good.

While she was chatting listlessly over a wonderful little supper on the roof of a world-famous hotel that night, Daisy Meadows was chatting, rather more vivaciously, it must be confessed, in the window of an attic room in a Fifty-second Street lodging house.

Daisy had discovered Dalton's great weakness, his plays, and she asked him so many questions about them in such a whole-hearted manner that she quite dazzled him with his own greatness. She even listened while he read aloud to her scenes from his five-act tragedy, which had been turned down by no less than twelve managers; and when it is pointed out that Joan of Arc was the heroine of this masterpiece, there is nothing more to be said.

"It's a sweet little play," she prattled, when he looked up for her approval after the third act curtain, "but I think New York audiences like something more modern, don't you? France is such a long way off, and Joan has been dead so many, many years, you know. Why don't you write a play all about Broadway?"

"About Broadway!" he frowned.

"H'm m'm. You can, you know, if you want to."

He turned away, a little disappointed in her.

"I don't think I could," he said. "In

the first place, I don't know New York well enough."

Daisy thought she was safe in letting the modern drama rest after that, and began to tell him, all over again, how hard it was for a really refined girl in a musical show.

"Although, of course," she added, "there are many sassiety buds on the stage nowadays. Mumsey made sure of this before she let me even think of becoming an actress."

"Your mother must have been glad to know you found employment in such a pleasant company," Dalton said. "Frohman manages Maude Adams too, doesn't he?"

She nodded prettily.

"What show is Pam with?" he asked next.

Daisy hung her head and moved to the extreme edge of the window-sill.

"But Pam isn't working now!" she said artlessly. "Did—did you think she was?"

He did.

"You see, she goes out every night—almost," he explained.

There was an awkward little silence, and presently Daisy jumped up and started demurely toward the door.

"I—I guess I'd better go," said she. "Yes, I'd better go; it's my night to write to Mumsey anyway. And Pam—well, you see there's Mr. Haverton."

"Who?"

"Paul Haverton."

"Who's he?"

Miss Meadows played with a bit of blue ribbon on her frock, twisting and untwisting it.

"He's tremendously rich, a millionaire—that's who Paul Haverton is," she lisped at last.

Dalton looked at her hard, but her eyes sought the floor.

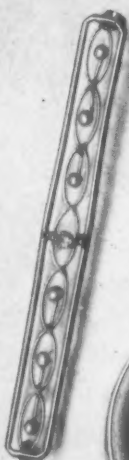
"And he's in love with Pam, I suppose—is that it?" the boy demanded.

"Oh!" cried Daisy, and she clasped her hands. "I know I must go," said she, and this time she made good her promise and departed, Dalton calling after her please to come again.

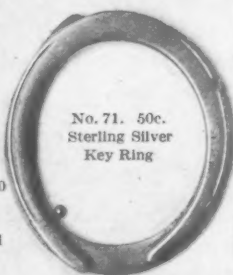
From her own floor Miss Meadows leaned over the baluster and waited pa-

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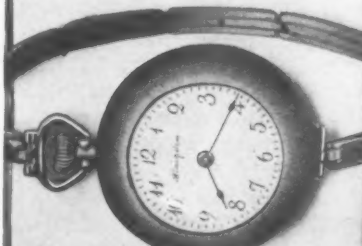
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tiently until she saw some one pass in the hall below. She hadn't long to wait until Madam Diddie waddled by, and Daisy, who was no respecter of persons, called shrilly to her landlady, at the same time dropping a dime in her path.

"Dearie," she cried, "chase yourself next door and get me a pack o' smokes—any kind; I don't care which. How're they comin', anyway?"

Madam Diddie glanced up, beheld her loveliest lodger, and snorted unmistakably.

"They aint comin' a-tall," she replied with a certain significance. "What's the matter wi' you—lost your grip?"

"It's a long, sad story, dearie," sighed Daisy. "Just when I could almost feel the ring on my matrimonial fin, the old man blew out o' Boston and Houdini-ed Roger away to Europe. And maybe I don't hate the whole darn commonwealth now!"

Madam Diddie chuckled.

"Yes, it's a long, sad story—sure!" said she. "But you'll hev to come across jus' the same, Meadows. You know I'm too old for college boys and gotta depend on my payin' guests. Kin'ly lemme see the color o' your bank-notes in the mornin'. I'll be up and in my boodywah as early as ten o'clock."

After which she departed with stately tread in the direction of the front stoop, and Daisy faced the predicament of losing her dime or going down after it. She chose the latter—when she saw the much-gifted comedian heave in sight at the end of the hall.

This was the night, too, that Pam got home before twelve—early for Pam. And she climbed the four flights of stairs in silence, so that a number of ladies and gentlemen in that vicinity slumbered peacefully through the night, a thing they didn't do when Pam's home-coming was marked with song.

She was glad when she got in her own little room and could kick off her white canvas slippers. It was hot and stuffy, but she was glad. And, for some reason, she would have gone to bed without looking in to see how Dal was feeling if the boy had not called her softly by name.

Then she went to the door.

"What's doin'?" she asked, with an attempt at cheerfulness.

He looked up.

"Are you—ill?" he demanded.

"Why, you boy, of course I'm not! What made you ask that?"

"Something's wrong," he said. "I know it is. Wont you tell me—trust me? You see, I've got so used to the sound of your voice as you came upstairs at night that I knew—in a minute! Something was wrong to-night. You're in trouble."

"Oh, it's nothing—don't amount to a row o' pins, really."

"Yes, it does, for it's made a difference in you," he insisted.

She only laughed and beat her hands softly together.

"It's not worth bothering your head about—honest!" said she.

He was silent for a second; then:

"Have you quarreled with Mr. Haverton?" asked he.

She turned on him like a tigress.

"Who? Mister who?"

"Haverton."

"Haverton!"

"Yes."

Silence.

"I suppose Meadows has been here telling you things?" she asked, with an ugly laugh. "She told you who Paul Haverton is?"

"Yes—a millionaire."

"That's what he is all right, all right!" she cried shrilly. "A millionaire! And we had a bust-up to-night, too!"

"I'm sorry," said Dalton.

"Humph, sorrow don't cost anything or do any good," she declared, with the same ugly laugh. "Yes, we've quarreled—I thought he was going to strike me—just at first; then, I looked again, and I thought he was going to cry. Lord, aint it funny? If he had 'a' struck me, I'd—I'd have told him the whole truth, I believe; but if he'd 'a' cried, I'd have beat him with my two fists—sure!"

Dalton leaned on his elbow and watched her with round, anxious eyes. In the moonlight he looked like a child—he was so thin and white and weak.

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he ventured. "Please believe how sorry I am—"

Her lips parted, ready for a torrent of abuse. She and Haverton had quarreled about Dalton; he was the sole reason for the misunderstanding. Coming home, down Riverside, Pam had asked him, all of a sudden, if he would take a little sick boy she knew at the house out for a drive in his car occasionally. Haverton said yes readily enough; then, presently, it developed the little sick boy was a grown man of twenty-four. Words followed—Pam couldn't just recall them now, but he accused her of trying to deceive him, of being in love with Dalton. And Pam, stung to the quick, hurt, humiliated, refused stubbornly to explain certain things which would have cleared the atmosphere in a twinkling.

Still smarting from his words, bitter with disappointment, she would have told the boy the whole truth. But she didn't—why, she couldn't have told you for the life of her. She simply didn't. She laughed; she asked if he wanted his lemonade; and as she went back to her room she said cheerily:

"Of course I'll get a telegram in the morning—first thing.... Good-night, old scout."

But in the morning there came no word from Haverton, and at ten o'clock Pam started out on her daily pilgrimage from Joe Weber's to the Circle, looking for work. And it was that very day that she was gathered into the chorus of a big Syndicate show, ready to go into rehearsal at once. So she came home with her contract at noon—unlucky in love, lucky at everything else!

She told Dalton that she was rehearsing, but when he asked her about Haverton she only shrugged her shoulders, and for the rest he thought she avoided him.

If it hadn't been for his typewriter during the day and faithful Daisy at night, Dalton would have been very, very lonely with Pam at work. But—and it was a secret—he was writing another play; and of course Miss Meadows climbed to the attic and chatted with him, every evening after supper.

Then, one evening, she came wearing a black, clinging dress, and she had left

off her rose-bloom; and Dalton, being a born dramatist, knew directly he saw her that something had happened.

"Why, Daisy!" he said.

She sank down on the window-sill, and with half-closed eyes said:

"Frank, I have come to say—good-by."

"Good-by!.... Daisy!"

She nodded; their team work was pretty nearly perfect.

"Yes, I—I am going," she faltered.

"I—you see, I can't get work, and I owe— When I think how much I owe dear Mrs. Diddie, it frightens me! I don't know what to do! Of course, she's not to blame; she's got a living to make, but— Oh, Daddy, I wonder if you know?"

It maddened him. She had covered her face with her plump, white hands and was sobbing.

"For God's sake, Daisy—little girl!" he cried.

"Never mind—me."

"But I do, I must! Do you mean—is it possible that you mean Mrs. Diddie—?"

Daisy raised one hand to check the wild flow of words.

"S-sh! She's a widow, with her own living to make, Frank."

He walked to the window and glanced out, his hands deep in his trousers pockets, his head slunk between his shoulders. His dark hair had grown long, and his face was very lean and white, and he wore, bloused, a light silk shirt—which Pam had washed in a tin basin with soap brought from the cloak-room of a smart restaurant. Of course there were no chimney-pots, no pigeons, and no mignonette in the window, but he had read Murger and "Trilby," and—it was like a scene from a play, he and Daisy, way up under the roof in this theatrical lodging-house. Even at this moment, with the fear of losing Daisy in his heart, the dramatic value of their parting was buzzing in his brain. His own birth, had he been capable of remembering that event, would have been to Frank Dalton but so much material to be utilized sometime or other.

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you out—turn you adrift in the streets!" he muttered. "And I thought she was kind, humane! H'm, she's a fiend! And you sha'n't go; I will give up my room to you and go sleep on the fire-escape! Why, why, Pam owes—I owe—everybody in this house owes the woman! Then why must you pay or go? I want to know that! A young, innocent girl like you, without friends, without money! God, it is hard to believe that such things can happen right here in New York!"

"Anything can happen right here in New York," she sighed, with the look of an early Christian martyr. "You don't know your Manhattan, Dal."

He frowned; he didn't relish her insinuation, but—

"Daisy, you had money; you had saved money; Pam told me so!" he cried suddenly. "Once she said, when I was asking her how the unemployed girls got through the summer, that a few were thrifty souls and laid by a little for a rainy day; she said you had done that—that you need have no fear of Mrs. Did-die—you were fixed. . . . And I was so glad, so thankful! I don't understand."

"Oh,"—she forced a laugh—"the money's all gone now. I spent it."

"That was foolish, dear. You had enough to last you."

"Yes." Her lips trembled; she was silent. Then: "But I didn't spend it foolishly, Dal—oh, you must believe that!"

"What then?" he asked, and he folded his arms on his chest and glowered.

She moistened her lips with the tip of her little red tongue.

"You mustn't ask me," she faltered.

"I must, I will!" he shouted. "If you didn't waste it—"

"I didn't! Every penny—I—I lent it—most of it. You have made me say it and I hate you for it, too!"

"You lent it!"

Daisy's gold curls bobbed up and down.

"To whom?"

"That I will not tell you; it isn't honorable!" she cried, with a quick little lifting of her head.

"Did you lend it to these people in this house?" he demanded.

"Ye-es."

"To—Pam, for one?"

"For one, ye-es."

"But why should Pam borrow from you?" he frowned. "She owes Mrs. Did-die—goodness knows how much; and she certainly didn't spend it on food or clothes!"

"No-o." Daisy's voice came almost in a whisper. "She wanted it—she said she wanted the money for ice and milk and medicine."

Dalton repeated the words after her in the same hushed tone, and the girl, perhaps realizing for the first time what she had done, uttered a low, piercing cry.

"What have I done?" she sobbed. "You made me say it—you wrung it from me, word by word. Oh, it is terrible!"

He sat down heavily on the side of the bed and his cheeks burned with excitement.

"So Pam got the money from you to buy me food," he said slowly. "It is to you I owe my life. And it is to me you owe your present predicament! But I will make atonement—I swear it! If there is only some place you can go—just for a little while, until I am on my feet again, a week at most. Oh, the torture of it! To be ill and helpless when you are in need!"

She sank down on her knees beside him and nestled her head against his heart.

"Don't!" she pleaded. "Don't look so wretched; you make me miserable. Now that I come to think of it, there is some one—my old nurse. Dear old Aunt Hannah! I can see her now, faithful creature! She had been in our family for generations, and when the war broke out, and Daddy went to join Mr. Lee's army—I'm a Southern girl, sir!—Mumsey sent old Hannah North. I have often heard her tell how I cried for her for weeks and wouldn't go to any of the other servants, . . . Yes, I will go to Aunt Hannah."

There followed an awkward little silence, and Dalton coughed nervously,

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"Oh," he said carelessly, "it's just a little thing I've been wanting to do for some time."

which upset Daisy and finally caused her to scramble to her feet. And still Frank said nothing, sitting there, staring straight ahead, with flushed cheeks and parted lips.

Miss Meadows tossed her head; she was peeved.

"I'm going," she announced.

He looked up and said: "Eh—what?"

"I'm going. Good-by."

"Good-by," he returned, and glanced at his typewriter, in the corner.

"Don't come to the window and don't speak of me to Mrs. Diddie—or Pam!" she said. "I—they don't understand. And don't mention Aunt Mandy to them; they'd laugh; they've got no heart. That poor old creature is just as dear to me—you understand!"

She held out her hand, and he took it, and held it for a brief minute and then let go. Before she was out of the room he had set up his typewriter.

"I'll send you my new address," she called back to him, and he replied, "Thanks, do," as he inserted a sheet of paper.

Daisy Meadows stopped in the hall and pinned on a hat and got a suit-case; at the front door was a taxicab, and on the front stoop was the household, *en masse*. Daisy smiled upon all without favor, and she was in the act of tweaking the Dutch comedian's nose when she saw for the first time the red taxicab.

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"Did Roger get away from his paw, dearie?" asked the landlady, as she lovingly removed a thread from Miss Meadows' skirt.

"Well, I guess he did," nodded Daisy emphatically. "And believe me, it'll take some little *Sherlock Holmes* to find us this time. But I won't ride in any common taxi—I just won't!" she declared, as she tripped lightly down the steps and hopped into the machine.

Dalton never received Daisy's promised address, but if he cared he succeeded admirably in hiding his feelings. Although he was still far from well, he now worked all day at the typewriter, and seemed to regard Pam almost as an intruder when she stopped in to ask how he was feeling. Two weeks went by. Now that she was rehearsing, the management allowed Pam to draw five dollars on her salary, and she promptly went and spent it on tonic and some delicacies for the boy.

"Look here, youngster," she said once, when she came home at supper-time and found him still writing, "what's the use in your wasting all that good paper and precious time? Quit it—rest up, take your tonic and get well. Then I think I can tell you where you can string 'em for fifteen per—in the chorus."

He looked at her aghast.

"I—in the chorus! A chorus man!" he gasped at last.

"Sure! Why not?" she wanted to know. "It's money in your pocket and you've got to get a job sometime, haven't you? I hate to say this like anything, Dal, but what's the use in bluffing yourself that you can earn a living doin'—that?"

He glanced up; she was pointing at the loose typewritten pages on the bed, and he could have killed her, then and there, with the fingers which had done the very work she sneered at.

"Pam," he said, slowly, distinctly, "you've been very kind to me, and I truly appreciate what you—and others!—have done while I was ill. When that"—he tapped the manuscript—"is the talk

of Broadway, I will try to repay you, with interest, for your time and care. But now, I must ask you, in my presence at least, to treat my work—"

"Dal!" she cried. She was half-laughing, half-frightened. "Is that the third act curtain of your masterpiece—or what? Repay me! With interest! Excuse me while I loff—bus'ness of loffin,' Mr. Director, please."

"I mean it; I'm in earnest!" he insisted.

The smile died on her face.

"Well, of course," she said slowly, watching, waiting for a sign, a word, "of course, me lawd—"

"That's not funny," he cut in with a quick jerk of his head. "And you are interrupting me besides."

She swung round on her heel, and lifting her skirts, minced daintily out of the room.

"I must hand it to you, Dal," she threw back at him. "Some genius!"

"Pam!" he called. "Understand me—wait! Gratuitously—"

"Eh? . . . Oh, can the big-time stuff, boy. Night-night!" And she closed the door very gently behind her.

The next day she left New York with the show which was to open out of town, but when she stopped outside of Dalton's door, she heard the clatter of his machine, and so she went away without disturbing him and without saying good-by. In parenthesis, it may be stated that Dalton didn't realize she was gone until the following afternoon.

It isn't that Manhattan days have fewer minutes to the hour; it is only that time hangs heavier on our hands elsewhere. Therefore Mr. Jack Frost, whose return to town Pam once upon a time had been afraid Frank Dalton would never see again, was back in our midst with an old-fashioned snow-storm the very night that passers-by saw for the first time the huge electric sign carrying:

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after the performance, it was almost deserted, but a tall, handsome woman, wrapped to her chin in sable, still lingered, waiting for her car, which was late. There was something about this woman which arrested the man's attention, and he looked again, then hurried forward:

"Pam!" he cried.

She turned and smiled at him in that frank, boyish manner which he remembered so well.

"How's Dal?" she asked. And: "Congratulations!"

"Oh!" He shrugged carelessly, lighted a cigarette, and stood watching her with a dash of impertinence in his eyes. "It's just a little thing I've been wanting to do for some time," said he, jerking his thumb in the direction of the dark and silent auditorium. "Reminds a fellow of old times, eh? I mean the show."

She nodded, and he noticed the magnificent diamonds in her ears.

"Yes, it's a pretty good copy of Fifty-second Street and the old bunch there last summer," she returned. "Of course I knew it would be when I saw your play announced; that is why I came."

He was torn between anxiety to know her opinion of his play and a desire to feign indifference to its ultimate fate. Perhaps Pam saw this, for she said very gently:

"It's sure to earn a lot of money for you—on the road. Yes, the provinces 'll eat it up. For New York, I'm not so sure."

"But," he protested hotly, "it's about New York, for New York! It wasn't written for the tall grass."

"Still that's where you'll make your money," Pam insisted. "You see, in spite of what you said, Dal, it's—not New York!"

"Not New York?" he repeated.

She nodded.

"It's not New York; it's not Broadway at all. It's what the folks in the Hinterland think Broadway is like; but New York knows better. For that reason alone it'll make you a rich man."

"What's wrong with it?" he asked.

"Your point of view—that's what you

writin' boys call it, I think. Well, old man, that's all wrong. And the last act. You work like an amateur Knickerbocker. It's not the stuff of a man who knows his city. For instance, the hero marries his boyhood sweetheart, who is called from her country village at the last moment—and in the last act!—by the sweet, self-sacrificing chorus-girl heroine—who weds her millionaire admirer!"

"Of course that's a false note, but—"

"Wait!" she commanded. "You are the hero, of course, and Daisy Meadows is the good little heroine; blondes always are. You're right there, sonny. But—it was me that stole the lemon at Weber's and brought it home to you—me, not her! Well, let that pass. Yes, I will too! But I can't forgive you makin' me tell that old chestnut about how the family was ruined by the Civil War; after that, it's a wonder you didn't make one of us say our prayers on the stage!... Then the story of the negro mammy who had been in the family for five generations; did Meadows tell you that originally?"

He shook his head, and after a second glance she continued:

"And how they howled when you made me pull that 'I am a Southern girl' stuff! For I was the comic. The foolishness about pearls for birthstones—Dal, where did you get it? People don't dream such rot! Of course I object to being laughed at, even on the stage; but if the rest of your play had been as good as your burlesque chorus-girl you'd wake up to-morrow with a New York hit to your credit."

"Do you think so?" he asked.

"Yes. It was your last act that killed its chances. When you lined 'em up, ready for the parson—good-night! And Meadows to a millionaire!"

He glanced cautiously around the deserted lobby, was reassured, and laid a damp, nervous hand on Pam's arm.

"Listen! That wasn't my work," he whispered. "When I took the script to Max Morro, the last act was altogether different. And he sent for Jones, the play doctor, who wrote in that ending; he said the public would demand it. Mine was not that way at all!"

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"Dal! What was your way?"

The old red spots were on his cheeks again, and his breath came hot and quick.

"My last act—was Broadway!" he cried, and there was almost a sob in his voice. "At my finale the hero and the heroine were waiting the verdict on his play before they announced their secret marriage—in the second act. And the comic actress—"

"That's me!" cut in Pam eagerly.

"Now I didn't say so."

"Never mind. Go on!"

"Well, she and the millionaire went—housekeeping together. There wasn't any girl from home in my version."

For a second she was silent, and then she began to laugh, very softly, and it made Dalton fidget—why, he couldn't have told you.

"So you made Daisy and me change places all around, didn't you?" she said. "Meadows brought you the lemon; Meadows made the curtain for your window; Meadows pleaded with the comedy landlady to let you stay in the 'La Bohème' attic—good old Meadows! Yet if your play succeeds in New York, the credit must be to the comic chorus-girl! . . . Yes, that's my auto'."

He took her out and helped her into the luxurious car, then stood with his foot on the step, looking into her eyes. She returned his glance calmly.

"Wont you offer to give a pal a lift?" he asked at length.

She shook her head.

"Not to-night. Am I to congratulate you? And Meadows?"

He frowned and muttered under his breath.

"I don't know yet—wont until Saturday," said he.

Pam smiled in the darkness—how like Daisy to wait until she saw how the play was going!

"Not that I care very much, whatever her answer is!" added Dalton. "I tell you, Pam, in New York there're so many pretty girls—eh? I'm not so sure I want to get married—yet awhile, at least."

"Shame on you!" she cried, and as her

laugh rang out, he experienced the same unpleasant feeling.

He leaned in the car and took her hand, and she said nothing, did nothing, waiting.

"Why can't I go up town in your auto' with you, Pam?" he demanded.

"Because Mr. Haverton would object," she replied.

"Haverton!" he repeated—and smiled.

"Yes. You must remember him? He used to send me the fruit, the melons and peaches—you must remember!"

Dalton cleared his parched throat.

"So you've made up! Just my luck. Pam, you must remember, too! You can't have forgotten."

"I haven't forgotten," she nodded.

"Then—say that Haverton is nothing to you, Pam. I can't give you diamonds and sables, just at first perhaps, but later, when the play goes on the road—to the rubes who'll eat it up—eh? Pam, you wonderful girl you, I was a fool ever to let you go. Haverton—"

"Oh, never mind him!" she cut in rather warmly, and Dalton mistook the tone and only heard the words.

"You said yourself my play would coin money in the provinces," he reminded her. "Well, the sooner the better—let 'em send her out!"

"And Daisy?" she asked.

"Hang Daisy!"

"But there's Haverton."

"What's he to you?" growled Dalton.

Then she began to laugh, and this time he understood the odd little note, the ring, the mockery of it; and it stayed with him for many, many days.

"Tell William I'm ready—home!" cried Pam. "Honest and truly, Dal, you nearly killed me. If I put you in a play now, there's no doubt in my mind at all as to what the public would do. But don't worry; I sha'n't do it—I can't write 'slices of life.' Shall I tell you something before I go, Dal?"

He was silent, ugly and sullen, but he heard her mocking laugh, saw her dancing eyes.

"It's this, and it proves how little you know your Broadway, she cooed. "—what Haverton is to me. He's my husband."

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The young man walking at his side winced, as he always did under this stinging and jealous contempt for his parent; but it hurt worse now as he recalled the haggard lines that had been deepening in his father's face all summer.

"I tell you, Uncle Elmer," he said, "and whether you like it or not, I'm telling you again, that Father will be on his feet, solid and sure, this time day after to-morrow, when he ships off that elevator-full of wheat, if—"

"If?" stormed Elmer Steck. The hard wrinkles about his mouth seemed to twist into knots under the pull of emotion. "If? That fool word is your father's biggest asset, Nathan; always was. But it don't happen to be a Dun or Bradstreet symbol, Nathan, and I aint ever listened to it yet for getting at a

man's rating, and I aint ever going to, neither. No, I aint, Nathan, and I surely aint when it means—if I extend that note I hold against your father, which is due to-morrow and which—"

"But, Uncle Elmer, we don't ask for more than a day. We can't get the cars for the wheat until the day after."

"And which," continued Elmer Steck between tight lips, "goes to protest to-morrow. No, boy, not a day. Not one. It's not what your father would do for me, either."

"Yes, he would," declared Nathan. "You just called him improvident, you know." At this the young man smiled rather grimly.

The hard little old miser side-stepped, as he could do nimbly enough when it came to eating his own words. He lifted a thin, blotched, swollen-veined hand to his nephew's shoulder.

"I aint going to be surprised none," he said, "if your father lands on his feet, anyways, like you say. He always has done it, somehow, contrary to every sound business prediction. The open-handed fool for luck, he always did get more'n he deserves, like when he got your mother, Nathan, and me warning her against him, and me her only brother. And then again," went on the child-

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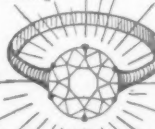


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less man, his features twisting into a sinister and horribly wistful grimace, "like when he got you for a son, Nathan. And for that matter, like ever since, the times he's jist skinned past bankruptcy, leaving even his eyebrows behind. But this time," stated Elmer Steck from a teeming store of envious hatred, "he gets his lesson. The note is due to-morrow. Understand, Nathan? Due to-morrow, and if it aint paid—"

"I know," said Nathan, "you'll take the wheat."

"I sure will, boy, and there wont be enough left in that elevator o' his to feed a sparrer."

"Uncle Elmer," said Nathan patiently, "that wheat now is worth an average of ten to fifteen cents more a bushel than father paid the farmers during the summer for it, which is enough, over what you loaned Father, to handle the wheat, to set him right with the world again."

"Ten cents," said Elmer Steck, "is a dinged scant margin on a jumpy, speculative market. Or fifteen cents, either. You know it, Nathan, for you've tried to borrow enough on that wheat to cover the face of my note, and you couldn't quite manage it."

"But there's that corner in Chicago," Nathan earnestly reminded him for the eleventh time, "and the shorts are buying the actual wheat. They have to, to cover. If Father ships to-morrow, or the day after, he gets ninety-three cents, which is ten cents and above, net, over what he paid, and the money is his, f. o. b., too, but—"

"To-morrow, then," repeated Elmer Steck, also for the eleventh time. "Let him ship to-morrow."

"But he can't get the cars to-morrow, somehow, and there's something mighty queer about that, too. Anyhow, though, he'll get them the day after, and if you'd extend—"

"That *if* again," whined the old man. "No, I wont, Nathan. The note is due, and I'll have my money."

"As well as the ten cents," Nathan added for him bitterly.

"Well, what of it?" The miser wet his lips with the tip of his tongue.

"What of it? Wont there be that much more for you, Nathan, when—when my will is read?"

"But I don't want it," cried Nathan, "I don't want any legacy from you of my father's misery. Do you get that, Uncle Elmer? I don't want it. Any good your money can do me, it can do me *now*, or not at all. It can take that look from my father's face that is breaking my heart, and if it don't do it, now, *now*, then, Uncle Elmer, I'll never touch a cent of your rotten money."

But the miser, loving money as he did, and knowing this hot spoken youth less, wagged his old head cunningly.

"Eh, eh, Nathan, rough words are an extravagance, boy. But trust your uncle. He's going to give you plenty of time to grow wiser before that will of his is read. And you'll be glad enough that rough words can't make him change it any, and you'll maybe not be feeling so rough, either, Nathan. Aye, all's your'n, lad, but not a pinch, not a dribbling, leaking nickel until poor Uncle Elmer meets the only note he's ever owed. But that un, Nathan, he owes to Nature, and the collector is a grisly old party totin' a long grass blade. —Eh, eh, come, let's have a look at that wheat."

"What in the world do you want to see it again for? You saw it only last month."

"Did I, Nathan? But mightn't it not be moulding, or—"

"Oh, no, it isn't," said Nathan indignantly; "Father's too careful ~~for~~ that."

"But I *like* to look at it," said the old man plaintively.

"It's not money," his nephew reminded him.

"Eh, but it's the same, Nathan, and it's going to be my money, and Sunday is my day for counting it, so come, Nathan. Please, Nathan."

"Was there," muttered Nathan to himself, "ever a stubborn old file!" But he was used to humoring the stubborn old file, who would let himself plead to no one else in all the world.

The elevator was down by the barge canal, wrapped in by a tangle of railroad tracks. A loop of track ran along a narrow strip between the towering



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structure and the canal, so that the long, reversible spout slanting down might either fill a car with the cascading grain, or, being adjusted, pour the stream through the hatch of a barge. But no string of cars waited there now, nor yet a barge. The place was deserted, still and dry in its own dust, a picture of Sunday dreariness.

Nathan brought the watchman and his keys from a switchman's shanty near by, and following the watchman, he and Elmer Steck passed through a dingy office and on up narrow steps, and so climbed aloft to the ledge of well-filled bins.

"Now rest a bit. You must, Uncle," said Nathan. "Look at you, all choking with dust, and panting like a winded porpoise. I'll bet you're dizzy, too. Wait. Quiet down. The grain isn't going to mould any in the next ten minutes."

"If it was a bin of gold eagles, now," wheezed the old man, "and they was glittering in there, the whole bin full, thousands o' bushels of 'em—eh, but I'd not mind the climb, and a higher climb yet, for that 'ud mean a bigger bin, and then maybe—maybe I couldn't keep



"Keep quiet," Nathan roared. "For God's sake, Uncle Elmer, keep quiet!"

from—from jumping right on in."

The young man gripped his arm. "Don't think about it," he ordered gruffly. "Come away from the edge, till you get back your breath—yes, and your head. There, now."

He turned from his uncle for a moment to speak to the watchman. He asked the watchman to bring a sampling-tube, such as they used for thrusting into a car of grain and bringing up a



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sample from any depth. A sample taken with that would perhaps satisfy his uncle, he hoped. Nathan surmised accurately enough that the miser looked on the wheat as his own, and that already he was planning to hawk it around until he should find the uttermost cent that any panic-stricken bear gone short would give.

"Get a move on, Jim," Nathan called after the watchman, who had disappeared on his errand. Then he looked around, to find his uncle squatting on his toes at the very edge of the runway under the eaves. The spare, eager old body leaned over the bin as a thirsty wayfarer over a pool of water. Flecks of chaff were banked on his eyelids like siftings of alkali. His black, churchly clothes were coated the gray of Death Valley. One wasted hand dipped into the wheat and lifted, and the grain trickled between the fingers, and the hand dipped again for more. The feel of the trickling between the bones was satisfying, yet provocative, prurient. The other hand fumbled and probed in an inner coat pocket, and twisted deeper, while the dried-leaf figure teetered on its toes. The groping hand jerked up and brought forth the envelope of an old letter, one that would do to hold a sample of the trickling grains, and as Nathan shrieked an angry warning, the movement wrenched the little old man off his balance and toppled him over into the well of cereal quicksand. He splashed dully, and in the first floundering slipped outward past the reach of arms and fingers for the ledge.

"Don't thresh about," cried Nathan, coming swiftly towards him.

The old man, flopping over on his belly, tried to stand. He was ankle deep. He stealthily lifted a foot, as if to cheat the quickened grain. The other foot sank to the knee.

"Don't," Nathan roared at him. "Keep quiet—oh, for God's sake, Uncle Elmer, keep quiet till I can reach you."

Nathan gained the part of the ledge where his uncle had been, threw himself flat on the planking, and stretched out an arm. He measured the space with his eye. "Now fall, fall towards me," he

yelled. "Quick, quick, and grab my hand!"

The old man wildly shook his head. Not he. To fall upon that shifting bed was to be the sooner buried. To keep his feet was the only thing. But his feet were sinking, almost imperceptibly, as in a slowly engulfing hour-glass, while myriad rivulets of the running grain trickled towards him, and every rivulet was a tendril dragging him under.

Nathan remembered his uncle's will and himself as beneficiary. After that he—yes, he *must* save him! For this was not death in ordinary. It was not a simple bereavement. The perishing man's will, and the surviving man's cursed knowledge of it, made this death hideous, as hideous as faces in hell. Nay, there was one of the faces already, out there in the grain, mouthing at him, stricken dumb by terror, the eyeballs pulsing big—his uncle's face.

"Well, I'll be—" It was the watchman come back, his ejaculation hewn short in the paralyzing first sight of the horror.

Nathan yelled at him. "Go down—run—quick, God Almighty, man—and open the chute! Let out the wheat! Let it out! Let it all out!—Go, you slow fool!"

He heard the watchman's boots thumping every third step in the downward flight. That watchman! It had happened—the miser's highly improbable toppling over to his own death—while the watchman was gone. And it was the nephew, the beneficiary, who had sent the watchman off, so that there were no witnesses. And the one to profit would be Nathan's father, and that, very curiously, at the very moment when he was on the verge of ruin. The watchman would have to tell what he knew about it—how he had been sent away—by whom—and what he saw when he came back. It was very ghastly thinking for Nathan, all this, and the only time to refute the theory of the prosecution was now—*now!* And the only way to do it was to save the old man, or to die trying.

"Uncle, Uncle Elmer," he pleaded, leaning far over to make the old man

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hear, "breathe deep. Oh, listen to me, Uncle Elmer, breathe deep, and just as you—know you're going under—draw your deepest and—*hold it!*"

Something in the piteous prayer, that about going under, snapped what raveled thread of sanity remained to the poor, doomed soul. Waist deep, the old man flung himself toward the ledge,



"It's Steck," he raved, "old man Steck! He's fell in!"

face downward, his body bending like a hinge, and his arms became flails, fighting the grain, awakening it to undulating life, until it seemed a bin of writhing serpents. Nathan uttered a dry, sobbing moan, and leaned far over, clutching for the buffeting arms.

The watchman, descending with his clattering thumps, stopped and opened

the gate between the wheat bin and the long chute of the loading spout. At the first sound of the grain rushing in to fill the spout, he went clattering on down the steps, through the office, and out the door. He turned the corner of the elevator, running like a crazy man, and took to the middle of the railroad track between the elevator and the large canal. When under the mouth of the big loading spout, he planted his heels in the cinders and stopped. To open the chute and let the wheat pour out, on the chance that it would pour swiftly enough to deliver yet living the human body in its bulk, such was his errand.

When the watchman hurtled through the dingy office, he took no note of a man in there, yet a man had entered only a few minutes before, and he stood at a high desk, searching through the elevator's books, putting down figures, and hunting out more to put down. It was a grim, dreary thing to be doing of a Sunday afternoon. But then, he was a weary man, and he had come here to be alone with his dead. They were his hopes that were dead, for he was advised that no empty cars could be available soon on the elevator siding. He furthermore knew the reason of that mystery. The reason was Elmer Steck, his brother-in-law. And, since Elmer was in it, hopes were as good as dust. The figures which

Nathan's father searched out and put down would show him how much was left him for making a new start in life. Their showing was lugubrious. It was more like a burying.

A racket overhead as of a cannon ball bumping down the steps made him look round, and he blinked as the wild figure of his watchman burst past.

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thought. "I wonder if he's running yet." And he went outside to look.

What Nathan's father saw made him think that a relentless Hard Luck had loosed a madman to complete his ruin. For what else, when there was that daft watchman feverishly tugging and prying at the trap in the mouth of the chute, insanely bent on draining the elevator of its treasure? He reached the watchman from behind, and flung him sprawling.

"You're a pretty watchman, you are!

You're a pretty watchman!" was all that his tongue could lay hold on for expression.

The watchman got to his feet and came at him. "It's Steck," he raved, "old man Steck! He's fell in. Fell plumb in, and now I gottuh turn him on till he runs out. Help me, boss, help me!"

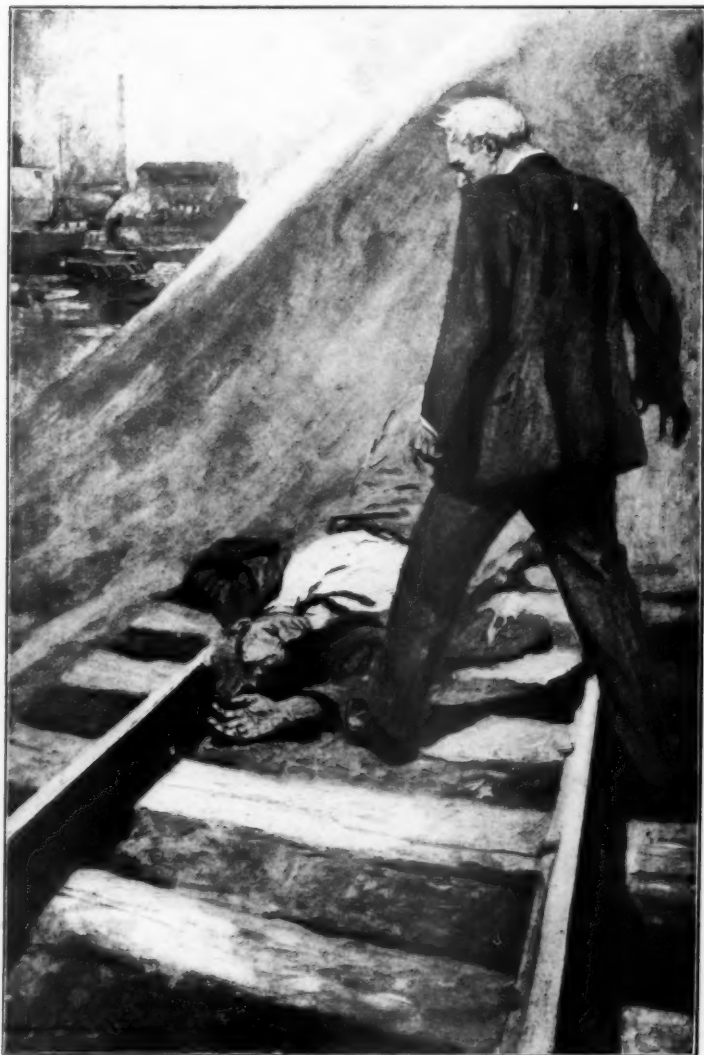
Nathan's father instantly understood. As a debtor, harassed and goaded, he understood yet more, everything. He understood it all at once, as one sees lightning strike a hay barn. He did not

have to await the after flash. He saw it already. The miser dead. Nathan would inherit. A half minute's delay, and Nathan would inherit. On the other hand, if they let out the wheat? Well, then, heaping on the railroad track, the grain would cascade down the bank into the canal. "And my wheat gone, it'll be my elevator that Elmer will take from me." But Nathan's father did not have to think this out. The lightning flash was enough.

On the instant, the grain was sent flooding from the chute and sizzling into the canal. Nathan's father watched it and muttered quizzically:

"I suppose Elmer 'ud call this improvident."

He watched



"How about Uncle Elmer?" came a choked voice.

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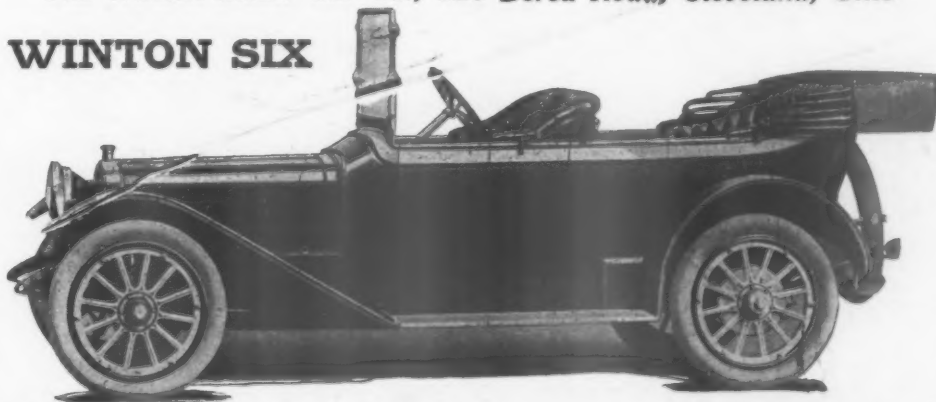
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with a strange indifference for the black lump that must be carried out in the torrential stream. His personal concern was less, his suspense hardly more intense, than that of a spectator at a moving picture drama. If Elmer Steck came out alive, or if he came out dead, he could not find it in him to care either way. It was solely Elmer Steck's own business.

Then, when the body did come through,—a shriveled, formless streak grotesquely riding the avalanche,—and when he had snatched it out of the pyramided grain, he gave no time to learning if it were still alive. Leaving that for the watchman's quicker curiosity, he sprang to close the chute and cut off the ruinous waste. But, as he turned, a second body shot forth, borne by almost the last spurt of the grain.

Astounded, for the watchman had said nothing of a second person in the elevator, he jumped round to snatch this newer apparition from the heap. It was rolling down the hillock of grain, not towards the canal but across the track rail, and when he reached it, it had rolled to his feet, and lay on its back. It faintly snorted under its thick coating of dust, clearing its nostrils, and took up again the business of breathing, by violent gasps; and it tried to open its eyes, and Nathan's father saw that it was his son.

"How 'bout Uncle Elmer?" came a choked voice. "I jabbed for him, and he jerked me in."

About Uncle Elmer there was little, perhaps nothing, to tell Nathan. Uncle Elmer's transactions, to every appearance, were to be with a Creditor State, on humanity's ledger named the Hereafter. The watchman, kneeling over the shriveled lump, let this be known.

"Boss," he wailed, "I say, boss, he's dead—stiff dead!"

"He's not!" Nathan's father cried back in fury, for he thought the watchman meant Nathan. He had forgotten Elmer Steck completely. "He's alive, you fool. And you hustle. Get a doctor here, quick."

With his handkerchief, still folded as he had assumed it that morning with his morning raiment, he wiped the pow-

dered chaff from his boy's face. Abruptly a shudder whipped through him. What if he had delayed the half minute in opening the chute? Only now did he know how near the misbegotten temptation had been to him. The shudder was his answer to that question. What if he *had* delayed?

Nathan thought he heard a sob, of anguish and joy both it was, and he opened his eyes again, inquiringly.

"I'm all right," said the boy feebly. "Only another good breath. There. But—Uncle Elmer?"

"Toler'ble, toler'ble, Nathan," wheezed a choking voice.

And there, as they looked, out of the shriveled lump rose a head, a grotesquely dusty old head, spitting angrily.

"What's the meaning of this here?" the resurrected miser demanded between fits of sputtering. "All this good wheat let into the canal! What's the meaning of it. I want to know?"

He glared at numberless little rivulets still trickling into the water, and wagged his head mournfully. "Now if that aint the limit of improvidence," he muttered.

Nathan's father could stand no more. Kneeling where he was, he stretched forth an arm and shook his fist at the croaking miser.

"If," he roared, "I hadn't let out my good wheat, I'd not be hearing you belly-aching this minute—no, nor any time hereafter. That's what, Elmer, and if—"

The miser snorted. It may have been the chaff in his nostrils. "That *if* again," he half growled. "Everlastingly that fool word, always your biggest asset." He stopped short, and the blank look on his face might have been real alarm. "Land o' Goshen," he cried, stirring himself on the pockets, "if I aint lost that note in all this wheat, plumb lost it, and it's in the canal by now. And I'm sure certain," he added, his old mouth twisting quizzically, "that no power on earth aint ever going to find it, neither. Which only goes to show," he went on with all the signs of immense disgust, "that what I said was so, for here you've gone and lit on your danged feet again!"



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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE THE GREAT SHOP WINDOW OF AMERICA

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